10 NEW STORIES

argosy

H. E. Bates
Phyllis Bentley
C. S. Forester
Edmund Gilligan
Arthur Miller

JUNE 3/-
Price in Australia

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At the Oval,
watching cricket

Rest your eyes
from crease and wicket

Googly, lob,
or l.b.w.

Odious bowling
need not trouble you . . .

Serene, although
the game's a frost

You read the
Monthly with the Most

ARGOSY

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

YOUR PEN CAN PAY FOR YOUR HOLIDAY

Wherever you take your holiday this year, your pen can pay the cost—and more ! More and more papers and magazines are interested in articles and stories with a holiday flavour. The mind when in fresh surroundings develops an alertness and stores up material which the trained writer can always use.

Over forty years ago the LSJ was founded under the aegis of the press. It has helped to success many who would not have succeeded otherwise and its personal methods have won praise in all parts of the world. The courses are in Journalism, Story Writing, Free Lance Journalism, Television Plays, Radio Plays, Literature, History, Poetry and Writing for Children.

If you feel attracted to any form of writing, you should seek the School's advice. The free book "Writing for the Press" makes no extravagant promises but describes moderately the methods of the School and shows how you can enter a field that is open to all. The fees are low—advice is free from:

LONDON SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM (A)
19 Hertford St., Park Lane, London, W.1.

GRO 8250

Member of the Association of British Correspondence Colleges

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

YOU IN PRINT

Is creative writing your ambition? Do you want to earn hard cash from a profitable hobby? The Premier School of Journalism shows the way to success in their brochure "You in Print." It explains exactly how their postal tuition encourages you to put pen to paper and really get into print!

For over forty years the Premier School of Journalism has been successfully coaching hesitant writers to accomplished authorship. Directed by top Fleet Street journalists—including a former Managing Editor of the Daily Express and a former News Editor of the Daily Mirror—the staff of professional writers trains you in an encouraging, individual style, aimed at developing your skill and getting you into print.

Write or phone now for your FREE copy of "YOU IN PRINT"—it's the first step towards writing success!

THE PREMIER SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM,
Dept. 1/6 53 Fleet Street, London E.C.4.
Phone FLE 7159

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

argosy

Vol. XXIV No. 6 **JUNE 1963**

Log Book	*Decorations by Graham*	**4**
Rhodanthe	**Harry Mark Petrakis** *Illustration by Biro*	**6**
Mr. Portway's Practice	**Michael Gilbert**	**16**
Healing Knife	*Decorations by Porter-G*	**26**
The Cat Who Sang	**H. E. Bates** *Illustrations by Jennetta Vise*	**28**
Malice	**Phyllis Bentley** *Illustration by Susan Einzig*	**38**
It Takes a Thief	**Arthur Miller**	**61**
Artistic Temperament	*Decoration by Ian Garrard*	**68**
Rendezvous U-295	**C. S. Forester**	**71**
Secret Airstrip	**Edward Lindall**	**75**
Flotsam	**Edmund Gilligan**	**86**
Grandfather Took It With Him	**Gordon McDonell**	**99**
Fight on Hurricane Island	**Joseph Green** *Illustration by Robb*	**116**
Argosy Crossword		**136**

Acknowledgments are due for permission to reprint copyright material by the following authors : to André Deutsch for the extract by Gypsy Rose Lee ; to Faber and Faber for lines from " Mandarin in Manhattan " ; to Hodder and Stoughton for the extract by John Lukens ; to Horizon Press for the extract from " Esar's Comic Dictionary " ; to Hutchinson for the extract from " The Diary of a Worm " ; to Michael Joseph for the extract by Joyce Cary ; to Methuen for lines by Harry Graham ; " It Takes a Thief " © Arthur Miller 1958 ; to Sheed and Ward for lines by Leonard Feeney. An excerpt only from Stevie Smith's " The Old Sweet Dove of Wiveton " appeared in April Argosy

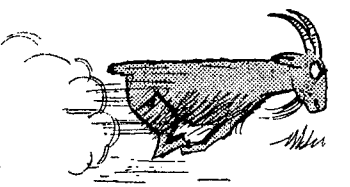
© Fleetway Publications Ltd., 1963

The Editor regrets that in view of the number of stories received from readers at home and overseas, it is not possible to return any typescript submitted to Argosy unless it is accompanied by sufficient postage and a self-addressed envelope. Typescripts should be sent to the Editor, Argosy, Fleetway House, London, E.C.4. Whilst every care is taken, Argosy cannot accept any liability for loss, damage, or delay

A Fleetway magazine

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Log Book



WE'RE always on the lookout for beautiful language, and one of our best sources comes from the Dutch seed catalogues that arrive before the swallows in bright-coloured and generally duplicate abundance.

They have a style all their own—earthy, practical, yet with flights of charming, untutored poetry in a kind of unexpected English perfectly adapted to the matter. Though we have no particular horticultural bent, we can never resist them.

"I trust my present harvest will meet the demand," one grower says of his Gladioli. "It produces a very long slender stem, it gets his name from the very perculiar colourschemes as each single bloom has in his throat such unique markings, that it sometimes deceives the eye and one would swear that a couple of butterflies are resting in the bloom. The pastelshaded heart has this unique marking. Nib off, from the top, the last two or three buds, if that you do neatly, nobody will know it, in a vase the result is quite markable."

And he ends with the unintentional couplet:

"I like all my Gladioli-loving customers to make a trial
It is certainly worth while."

This writer has a delightful habit of running pairs of English words together into Germanic combinations—nightfrosts, shyflowering, cutflowers, inbetween, sothat, summermonths, longspurred, depthroots, shrubgrowers—which gives his prose a romantic, Dylan Thomas flavour.

Of Oxalis he says, "The fourleaved clover with its very nice pink flowers is used for edging off. If you have children so round about five to seven, plant a few in a pot for them. They grow very quickly and they love to see the development." We have put a few in the office pot, and they simply love watching old Uncle Horatio.

Of Anemones—"Beloved flowers with their gay colours. Plant solitair. Too near each other the profuse foliage will make them shyflowering. *Beware of stagnant water!*"

"Tigered Iris, Scarce! A thing of beauty is a joy for ever, is not true for this bulb, for it flowers but one short day, but during that period it is sheer delight to watch them."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hardy Sunflowers are considered " very useful for the camouflaging of unsightly object in own or neighbours garden." Of Hardy Sweet Pea, " I have used it with some success to plant round a rather badly worn tree."

Pausing to speculate on what wears the tree so badly—goats?—we wonder if it would be wise to surround it with Bush Honeysuckle of which " the pretty coloured foliage is slightly poisonous to young lambs."

Philadelphus is a " delightful scented shrub which has been a yearly pleasure to my wife and myself as it sometimes flowers on my wifes birthday and sometimes on mine. A soft June night, a full moon, the delicious scent and bright innocent white flowers have influenced men, more than I dare to own up! "

And lastly, " There is a deeper pleasure derived from the beauty of the flowerworld, and even in the troublesome world we live in, a nice bouquet of flowers in the home, brings some happiness." But it is *our* opinion that those lines were not penned in this troublesome world at all, but winged their way straight from Eden itself.

It only remains to adapt such enchanting language to the delights Argosy offers. " Ten markable stories, heartwarming, skinchilling, a gay, new collection. Read together, or solitair, they lodge in the heartcore and give pure, lasting pleasure."

-JOHN SILVER

Horatio

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

6

Rhodanthe

By HARRY MARK PETRAKIS

I WAS twenty-seven years old that spring. Papa had still not given up hope that a man would be found to marry me. My brothers, Kostas and Marko and Niko, were married and had numerous children of their own. They were all concerned about me.

It was true that I wanted to be married. Papa had presented a number of men to me for my approval. I was not beautiful but neither was I so plain that I had to accept one of them. They were either too old or too loud or redfaced from drinking too much beer and wine. I think Papa grieved most about me when wine made him tearful. His only daughter, twenty-seven, and still unmarried. Friends who were bachelors drank and grieved with him. In the end they offered themselves as suitors to ease Papa's despair.

After an evening with one of them Papa waited for my decision. I told him I refused to accept such a man.

"You are twenty-seven years old!" he cried. "A daughter still unmarried at twenty-seven is a plague on a man's spirit. I cannot sleep for worrying about you. My health is breaking down. At the market everyone asks me, Panfelio, is your daughter married yet? Is she even engaged? I cannot bear much more."

"Yes, Papa."

"What was the matter with Gerontis?" he asked.

"He is too old," I said, "and his false teeth whistle when he speaks."

"You are too choosy!" Papa shouted. "Remember you are twenty-seven years old."

"Yes, Papa."

"What was the matter with Makris?" he asked. "He is a younger man than Gerontis."

"He is younger," I said. "But he greases his hair until it

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drips oil down his cheeks, and he spent all evening telling me how he can crack open a crate with his bare hands."

"I can still crack open a crate with my bare hands," Papa shouted. "Your poor mama was never the worse for it. You forget, my girl, you are twenty-seven years old."

"Yes, Papa."

One evening a week, my brothers brought their wives and children to our house to eat supper. The wives were red-cheeked, with great bosoms, and ate like contented mares. The house became a bedlam with children hanging from the lamps, and chairs collapsing with a sound of thunder. We assembled at the table and bowed our heads and Papa said grace.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

" We are grateful, O Lord, that we are well and together and for the food upon this table. Bring us together again next week and let there be a man for Rhodanthe among us. Amen."

When dinner was over and it was time to leave, each of the wives of my brothers kissed me benevolently on the cheek. One after the other my big brothers embraced me sadly and kissed me sombrely. Every parting was a festival of grief. Poor Rhodanthe.

I said good night to Papa and kissed him tenderly because I loved him very much. He was foolish sometimes and shouted a great deal but I knew how much he loved me too.

I went to my room and prepared for bed. I sat before the mirror and brushed my long hair. In those moments I fiercely felt a wish to be married and raise children of my own. Sometimes I thought I wanted that as much for Papa and Kostas and Marko and Niko as for myself.

The last cold months of winter passed. The winds grew gentle. The rain fell during the night, and in the daylight the earth smelled fresh as if it were awakened from a long sleep. One morning I saw a robin sitting on a branch of the cherry tree in our yard and I knew the spring had really come.

Each morning Kostas and Marko and Niko drove up in their trucks to have a cup of coffee while Papa ate breakfast. I knew they did that for me, so that I would not feel too lonely during the day.

They sat round the kitchen table, big strong men that made the kitchen seem smaller than it really was. The cups looked tiny and fragile in their massive hands. They smoked cigars and spoke in loud gruff voices to each other. But they were soft and gentle when they spoke to me.

When they had left with Papa for the market, I washed the dishes and cleaned the house. I worked quickly and felt a glow in my cheeks.

Because that day was so beautiful I then decided to take the bedding outside to air. I carried the sheets and blankets to the back yard and draped them across a line. When I finished hanging them up I was a little out of breath.

There was the sound of whistling in the alley at the back of the yard and a young man appeared. He was striding along with his hands in his pockets and his head flung back and a wild jubilant whistling ringing from his lips. I had heard whistling before, even the strong bass whistling of my brothers, but never a sound like he made. It was as if the spring had burst into song. As if the first slim green buds and the blades of new grass and the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

soft fresh wind had suddenly found a voice. And I felt a strange wild tremor through my heart.

When he saw me standing there he paused. For a quick tight moment the whistling ceased. His hair was thick and dark, and an untamed and errant curl glittered across his forehead. He smiled then and his smile was as reckless and daring as his whistle. Then he walked on quickly and the wild whistling rang out again. And as the sound faded a terrible loneliness overcame me. I went quickly into the house.

That night at supper I broke a cup and spilt soup from the pot while pouring it into a bowl.

"What is the matter with you?" Papa said. "You are nervous as a cat tonight."

"Nothing is the matter, Papa," I said, and felt a quick flame in my cheeks.

He cleared his throat and sighed heavily.

"It is not normal," he said sombrely. "Twenty-seven years old and still unmarried. You will become sick."

"I will not become sick, Papa," I said. "Do not worry about me."

"How can I help worrying?" he said. "What kind of father would I be if I did not worry about my daughter, still unmarried at twenty-seven." His lips quivered and he wiped a stray tear from his eye.

"Yes, Papa."

"You are too choosy!" he shouted. "You have not that right at your age. Gastis passed the market today. He asked how you were. He was taken with you. What in God's name was the matter with Gastis?"

"I have told you before, Papa," I said.

"Tell me again!" he shouted.

"His face is like one of his grapefruit," I said. "He never smiles. Whatever time of day you are with him always appears to be night."

Papa threw up his hands in despair.

"One is too young," he said. "And one is too old. One laughs like an idiot and one does not laugh enough. One is a banana and one is a grapefruit. I am telling you, my girl, I am losing patience!"

"Yes, Papa."

"What kind of man do you want?" he shouted again. "Tell me what kind of man you want?"

I paused for a moment in the doorway of the kitchen. A reckless excitement swept my tongue.

"I want a young man with dark hair," I said boldly. "And

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a wild dark curl across his forehead. A man who whistles and makes the earth burst into song."

Papa made his cross.

"What I have feared has come to pass," he said sadly. "You have become unbalanced."

"Yes, Papa," I said, and I ran back to him and kissed him gently. "Good night, Papa."

In the morning I could not wait for all of them to leave. They sat over their coffee for what seemed to be an eternity. Yet each time I looked at the clock I saw they were no later than they usually were.

When they had gone I ran to my room and carefully brushed my hair and tied it with my brightest ribbon. I touched my lips with a light red stain and pinched my cheeks. I went quickly downstairs and out of the back door. A moment of panic seized me when I realised I could not just stand there waiting. I hurried back into the house and pulled the blankets from my bed and ran with them down the stairs. I had just finished hanging them across the line when I heard the sound of the whistling again.

He came down the alley just as he had the morning before. His head flung back and his legs walking with great strong strides and that wonderful wild whistle singing on his lips. My heart beat suddenly as if it were going to burst apart.

When he saw me he stopped. He smiled again, a perfect and riotous smile. I could not help myself and smiled back. He walked slowly to the fence and carelessly and with a supple grace leaned his elbows upon it and put his face in his hands.

"You live here?" he asked. And he had a man's deep voice, but not nearly as harsh a voice as Papa had, and with revelry in it, unlike the voices of Marko and Kostas and Niko.

"Yes," I said.

"With your husband?" he asked slyly.

"With my father," I said quickly. "I am not married."

"Good," he said, and he smiled again and threw back his head and laughed a festival of tuneful laughter from his throat. "Good," he said again, and then he waved good-bye and started striding down the alley.

There were a dozen questions I wanted to call after him, a dozen things I wanted to say. I was ashamed because I had answered and yet I felt strange and alive for the first time in my life. I looked at the budding leaves and at the first blades of grass and at the early tulips and felt a fervent kinship with them.

The next morning it rained and I was in despair. I could not

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stand in the rain waiting for him to pass, or hang blankets on a line in the downpour. After a while I gave up hoping it would stop in time and consoled myself that the following morning the sun might shine again.

I finished the kitchen and wiped the last breakfast cups without spirit. I hung the dishtowel upon the rack, and heard a light tapping at the window.

My heart leapt to my throat because he was there. He waved to me through the rain-smeared glass. I ran to the door and flung it open. He came in dripping from the rain and the dark curly hair matted upon his head.

"You are soaked!" I said. "You'll catch cold! I'll get a towel."

He took the clean towel from my hands and began briskly to dry his hair. He rubbed his cheeks with vigour and smiled and shook his head.

"You weren't in the yard," he said.

I looked at him helplessly.

"It was raining so hard," I said. "I wasn't sure you would come."

When I realised what I had said I put my hand quickly to my mouth. But he only laughed softly.

"The rain is nothing," he said. "I missed you."

We looked at each other and there was taunting merriment in his dark eyes. I tried to think of something to say but all my senses seemed to have fled.

"I've got to go in a minute," he said. "I'll be late for work."

"A cup of coffee," I said. "It's still hot. It will warm you."

He came to the table and he was not as tall as any of my brothers and not as broad in the shoulders as my father, but there was grace and strength in the way he moved.

I brought the pot of coffee to the table and filled his cup. I could sense his watching me and I spilt some into the saucer.

"Weren't you afraid to let me in?" he said.

I turned away quickly and shook my head.

"What's your name?" he said.

"Rhodanthe," I said. I put the pot back on the stove and then turned to face him.

"A pretty name," he said. "A name for a flower."

I looked down at the floor because I was sure the frantic beating of my heart would show in my cheeks.

"I know a great deal about you," he said, and when I looked up he winked slyly. "I know more about you than you realise."

"You do?" I said.

"I know you are sometimes sad," he said, "because you do

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

not smile. I know you are sometimes lonely because you do not laugh."

We were both silent for a moment and I marvelled at how quickly he understood. And how natural it seemed that he should be sitting at my table drinking coffee.

He pushed back his cup and rose from the table and walked to the door. I followed him there, and he turned and paused with his hand on the knob. He bent a little and kissed me. A quick impulsive kiss that brushed my lips with the grace of the spring wind.

I stepped back, shocked. "You had no right!" I said. "You should not have done that."

"I wanted to kiss you," he said, and smiled wickedly. "I do what I want."

Then he was walking swiftly with long strong strides through the rain. My heart flew after him.

That night the family gathered again. All the rosy-cheeked wives and the multitude of children. I worked with a jubilation I found hard to conceal. I even sang a little to myself, and several times noticed one of my brothers watching me strangely.

At the end of the meal the children scrambled from the table to resume playing in another room. The wives picked up the plates and carried them to the kitchen. Niko, the youngest of my brothers, caught my arm.

"What makes you sparkle tonight?" he said. "I have never seen you like this before." He gestured at Papa. "What has happened to this girl?"

I tried to shake off his hand but he laughed and held me tight. All of them watched me and I felt my cheeks flaming.

"She is blushing," Marko cried. "Blushing like a schoolgirl."

"Let me go," I said to Niko, "or I will bring this plate of bones across your head."

"She is in love!" Kostas roared. "The girl's in love!"

A reverent quiet descended upon the room. The wives came from the kitchen to stand in the doorway with their eyes open to great bursting cups. Niko let me go slowly. All of them watched me in some kind of awe.

"Rhodanthe," Papa said, and there was a great joy stirring in his voice. "Is this true?"

My heart went out to him. He was growing old and loved me so much. I looked at each of my brothers and felt a great wave of affection for them. I could even forgive their smug wives, secure in marriage to good men, who listened in the doorway.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Yes," I said. "Yes."

"Thunder and lightning!" Kostas roared. He beat with his big fist upon the table. The dishes rattled and jumped.

"Hurrah!" Niko cried.

"I'll be darned!" Marko shouted.

Everybody looked at Papa. He silently made his cross and looked as if he were about to cry.

"God be praised," he said, and his voice trembled. "I knew you must come to your senses. I have brought you some good men. Which one of them have you reconsidered?"

"Five to one it's Makris!" Niko shouted.

"That grease pot?" Kostas cried. "She wouldn't touch him with a yardstick."

"It must be Gastis!" Marko said. "It has to be Gastis!"

"Silence!" Papa roared. "Silence!"

The room went quiet again. No sound except for the shrieking children in the parlour.

"Silence those little monsters!" Papa roared again. One of the wives went quickly to the parlour and a moment later silence fell in every part of the house. She came back and softly closed the door.

"Which one is it?" Papa spoke to me gently.

I stood at the foot of the table and folded my hands. I took a deep breath and for one brief moment closed my eyes and then opened them again.

"It is none of the men you have brought home," I said.

They all looked shocked. A rumbling began round the table. Papa waved his hand fiercely for silence.

"I do not understand," he said slowly. "It is not Gastis or Makris or Sarantis or Gerontis or any of those other good men?"

"No, Papa," I said.

"Who the devil is it then?" Marko said angrily.

A flare of panic seized me but I had gone too far to turn back.

"A young man who passes on his way to work in the morning," I said. "He has dark and curly hair and he whistles in a way I have never heard anyone whistle before."

For a long startled moment no one spoke.

"She has gone nuts!" Kostas cried. He looked round for confirmation.

"Who is this guy?" Marko shouted. "I'll teach him to whistle at my sister!"

"Dirty hoodlum!" Niko spat between his teeth.

Papa beat with his fist upon the table. Everyone became quiet again.

"You are joking?" Papa said, and he made an effort to

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

laugh and one of the wives began to laugh with him. Papa stopped laughing and glared at her, and she almost choked closing her mouth.

"I am not joking," I said. "He is a young man that I have spoken to a number of times. This morning we had coffee together."

"He had coffee with you this morning?" Marko shouted angrily. "In this house alone with you?"

"We'll have his teeth hot from his mouth!" Kostas cried.

"Dirty hoodlum!" Niko shouted. "Sneaking behind our backs."

"Who is he?" Papa cried. "Who is he?"

"I don't know his name," I said. I knew how that sounded, but I flung it at them because I was becoming angry too.

Papa exploded for all of them. Shock and anger ripping his face. The wives cowered in the doorway.

"You don't know his name!" Papa thundered. "You don't know his name!"

They all began roaring at once. I bit my lips hard, trying to stop the tears that burnt to break from my eyes.

"I don't know his name!" I cried angrily. "I don't know his name! I know I love him! I heard him whistling and saw him and everything changed. This morning it rained and I could have cried because I would not see him and then he knocked on the window." They all sat staring at me and I struggled furiously to find words to overwhelm them. "There were other men I might have loved years ago," I said. "Men who were frightened off by your shouts and your fists. But you will not take this man from me. He told me he knew I was sad because I did not smile and that I was lonely because I did not laugh and then he kissed me!" I felt a tremor shake my body and my voice rose fiercely. "I don't know his name! I only know I love him!"

They were sorry afterwards. Papa came to my room and kissed me and cried a little. Then Marko and Niko and Kostas came and touched my hair gently with their big hands and tried to speak with their eyes. I forgave them because I knew how much they cared for me. And I consented to let Niko wait with me in the morning to see the young man.

But he did not come the next morning. I thought perhaps he knew about Niko, and the following day I waited alone. I waited in the yard with the spring wild and tangled about my head and the blossoms breaking on the branches of the trees and the earth flowing and alive.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He did not come. And the spring passed into summer and the leaves grew long and green on the trees and the sunflowers bloomed among the stones and the birds were everywhere. Speckled robins and grey starlings and brownish redwings.

After a while I knew Papa and the others thought I had made it all up. That I had grown weary of the procession of sad suitors and made the story up to keep others away.

They do not understand that some day he will come back. On a morning when the green hearts of the lilac bushes tremble awake in the wind. When the first slim green buds break upon the branches of the maples and the catalpas.

He will come striding along with his hands in his pockets and his reckless head flung back and the wild jubilant whistle ringing from his lips. And I will feel once again that the early green buds and the first fragile flowers and the soft new winds have suddenly burst into song.

© Harry Mark Petrakis 1963

Jolly shepherd, shepherd on a hill,
  On a hill so merrily,
  On a hill so cheerily,
Fear not, shepherd, there to pipe thy fill.
Fill every dale, fill every plain:
  Both sing and say, " Love feels no pain."

Jolly shepherd, shepherd in the sun,
  In the sun so merrily,
  In the sun so cheerily,
Sing forth thy songs, and let thy rhymes run
Down to the dales, to the hills above:
  Both sing and say, " Life is for love."

Jolly shepherd, shepherd in the shade,
  In the shade so merrily,
  In the shade so cheerily,
Joy in thy life, life of the shepherd's trade,
Joy in thy love, love full of glee:
  Both sing and say, " Sweet love for me."

Jolly shepherd, shepherd Daphnis' love,
  Daphnis' love so merrily,
  Daphnis' love so cheerily,
Let thy fancy never more remove,
Fancy be fixed, fixed not to fleet:
  Still sing and say, " Love's yoke is sweet."

J. WOTTON, c. 1600

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This month's reprint by readers' special request

MR. PORTWAY'S PRACTICE

BY MICHAEL GILBERT

I QUALIFIED as a solicitor before the war, and in 1937 I bought a share in a small partnership in the City. Then the war came along and I joined the Infantry. I was already thirty-five and it didn't look as if I was going to see much active service, so I cashed in on my knowledge of German and joined the Intelligence Corps. That was fun, too.

When the war finished I got back to London and found our old office bombed and the other partner dead. As far as a legal practice can do, it had disappeared. I got a job without any difficulty in a firm in Bedford Row, but I didn't enjoy it. The work was easy enough but there was no real future in it. So I quit and joined the Legal Branch of Inland Revenue.

This may seem even duller than private practice, but in fact it wasn't. As soon as I had finished the subsidiary training in accountancy that all Revenue officials have to take, I was invited to join a very select outfit known as I.B.A. or Investigation Branch (Active).

If you ask a Revenue official about I.B.A. he'll tell you it doesn't exist. This may simply mean that he hasn't heard of it. Most ordinary Revenue investigation is done by accountants who examine balance sheets and profit and loss accounts and vouchers and receipts and ask questions and go on asking questions until the truth emerges.

Some cases can't be treated like that. They need active investigation. Someone has got to go and find out the facts. That's where I.B.A. comes in.

It isn't all big cases involving millions of pounds. The Revenue reckons to achieve the best results by making a few shrewd examples in the right places. One of our most spectacular

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

coups was achieved when a member of the department opened a greengrocer's shop in Crouch End—but that's by the way.

When the name of Mr. Portway cropped up in I.B.A. records it was natural that the dossier should get pushed across to me. For Mr. Portway was a solicitor. I can't remember precisely how he first came to our notice. You'd be surprised what casual items can set I.B.A. in motion. A conversation in a railway carriage; a hint from an insurance assessor; a bit of loud-voiced boasting in a pub. We don't go in for phone tapping. It's inefficient and, from our point of view, quite unnecessary.

The thing about Mr. Portway was simply this. That he seemed to make a very substantial amount of money without working for it.

The first real confirmation came from a disgruntled girl who had been hired to look after his books and fired for inefficiency. Mr. Portway ran a good car, she said. Dressed well. Spent hundreds of pounds at the wine merchant—she'd seen one of his bills—and conducted an old-fashioned one-man practice which, by every law of economics, should have left him broke.

Some days he had no clients at all, she said, and spent the morning in his room reading a book, detective stories chiefly; then took two hours for lunch, snoozed a little on his return, had a cup of tea, and went home. Other days, a client or two would trickle in. The business was almost entirely buying and selling of houses and leases and mortgages and sale agreements. Mr. Portway did it all himself. He had one girl to do the typing and look after the outer office, and another (our informant) to keep the books.

I don't suppose you know anything about solicitors' accounting, and I'm not proposing to give you a dissertation on it, but the fact is that solicitors are bound by very strict rules indeed. Rules imposed by Act of Parliament and jealously enforced by the Law Society. And quite right, too. Solicitors handle a lot of other people's money.

When we'd made a quiet check to see if Mr. Portway had any private means of his own (he hadn't), we decided that this was the sort of case we ought to have a look at. It wasn't difficult. Mr. Portway knew nothing about figures. However small his staff, he had to have someone with the rudiments of accountancy, or he couldn't have got through his annual audit. We watched the periodicals until we saw his advertisement, and I applied for the job.

I don't know if there were any other applicants, but I'm sure I was the only one who professed both law and book-keeping

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and who was prepared to accept the mouse-like salary that he was offering.

Mr. Portway was a small, round, pink-cheeked, whitehaired man. One would have said Pickwickian, except that he didn't wear glasses, nor was there anything in the least owl-like about his face. So far as any comparison suggested itself he looked like a tortoise. It was a sardonic, leathery, indestructible face, with the long upper lip of a philosopher.

He greeted me warmly and showed me my room. The office occupied the ground floor and basement of the house. On the right as you came in, and overlooking the paved courtyard and fountain which is all that remains of the old Lombards Inn, was Mr. Portway's sanctum, a very nice room on the small side, and made smaller by the rows of bookcases full of bound reports. In fact, the whole suite of offices was tiny, a box-like affair.

I have given you some idea of the scale of things so that you can gather how easy I thought my job was going to be. My guess was that a week would be quite enough for me to detect any funny business that was going on.

I was quite wrong.

A week was enough to convince me that something was wrong. But by the end of a month I hadn't got a step nearer to finding out what it was . . .

My predecessor hadn't kept the books awfully well, but that was inefficiency, not dishonesty.

I reported my findings to my superiors.

"Mr. Portway," I said, "has a business which appears to produce, in costs, just about enough to pay the salaries of his two assistants, the rent, rates, lighting, and other outgoings, and to leave him no personal profit at all. Indeed, in some instances, he has had to make up, from his own pocket, small deficiencies in the office account. Nor does this money come from private means. It is part of my duty as accountant to make Mr. Portway's own private tax returns"—this, it is fair to him to say, was at his own suggestion—"and apart from a very small holding in War Stock and occasional casual earnings for articles on wine, on which he is an acknowledged expert, he has—or at least declares—no outside resources at all. Nevertheless, enjoying as he does a 'minus' income, he lives well, appears to deny himself little in the way of comfort. He is not extravagant, but I could not estimate his expenditure on himself at less than two thousand pounds per annum."

My masters found this report so unsatisfactory that I was summoned to an interview. The head of the department at that time, Dai Evans, was a tubby and mercurial Welshman, like

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lloyd George without the moustache. He was on Christian-name terms with all his staff; but he wasn't a good man to cross.

"Are you asking me to believe in miracles, Michael?" he said. "How can a man have a wallet full of notes to spend on himself each week if he doesn't earn them from somewhere?"

"Perhaps he makes them," I suggested.

Dai elected to take this seriously. "A forger, you mean. I wouldn't have thought it likely."

"No," I said. "I didn't quite mean that." I knew as well as anyone that the skill and organisation, to say nothing of the supplies of special paper, necessary for banknote forgery were far beyond the resources of an ordinary citizen. "I thought he might have a hoard. Some people do, you know. There's nothing intrinsically illegal in it."

Dai grunted. "Why should he trouble to keep up an office? You say it costs him money. Why wouldn't he shift his hoard to a safe deposit? That way he'd save himself money and work. I don't like it, Michael. We're on to something here, boy. Don't let it go."

So I returned to Lombards Inn, and kept my eyes and ears open. And as the weeks passed the mystery grew more irritating and more insoluble.

I made a careful calculation during the month which ensued. In the course of it Mr. Portway acted in the purchase of one house for £5,000, and the sale of another at about the same price. He drafted a lease of an office in the City. And fixed up a mortgage for an old lady with a Building Society. The costs he received for these transactions totalled £171 5s. And that was around five pounds less than he paid out to keep the office going for the same period.

One day, about three o'clock in the afternoon, I took some papers in to him. I found him sitting in the chair beside the fireplace, *The Times*—which he read every day from cover to cover—in one hand, and in the other a glass.

He said, "You find me indulging in my secret vice. I'm one of the old school, who thinks that claret should be drunk after lunch, and burgundy after dinner."

I am fond of French wines myself and he must have seen the quick glance I gave at the bottle.

"It's a Pontet-Canet," he said. "Of 1943. Certainly the best of the war years, and almost the best Château of that year. You'll find a glass in the filing cabinet."

You can't drink wine standing up. Before I knew what I was doing, we were seated on either side of the fireplace with the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bottle between us. After a second glass Mr. Portway fell into a mood of reminiscence. I kept my ears open, of course, for any useful information, but only half of me, at that moment, was playing the spy. The other half was enjoying an excellent claret, and the company of a philosopher.

It appeared that Mr. Portway had come late to the law. He had studied art under Bertolozzi, the great Florentine engraver, and had spent a couple of years in the workshops of Herr Groener, who specialised in intaglios and metal relief work. He took down from the mantel-shelf a beautiful little reproduction in copper of the Papal Colophon which he had made himself. Then the first world war, most of which he had spent in Egypt and Palestine, had disoriented him.

" I felt need," he said, " of something a little more tangible in my life than the art of metal relievo." He had tried, and failed, to become an architect. And had then chosen law, to oblige an uncle who had no son.

" There have been Portways," he said, " in Lombards Inn for two centuries. I fear I shall be the last."

Then the telephone broke up our talk, and I went back to my room . . .

As I thought about things that night, I came to the conclusion that Mr. Portway had presented me with the answer to one problem, in the act of setting me another. I was being driven, step by step, to the only logical conclusion. That he had found some method, some perfectly safe and private method, of manufacturing money.

But not forgery, as the word is usually understood. Despite his bland admission of an engraver's training, the difficulties were too great. Where could he get his paper? And such notes as I had seen did not look in the least like forgeries.

I had come to one other conclusion. The heart of the secret lay in the strong-room. This was the one room that no one but Mr. Portway ever visited; the room of which he alone had the key. Try as I would I had never even seen inside the door. If he wanted a deed out of it, Mr. Portway would wait until I was at lunch before he went in to fetch it. And he was always last away from the office when we closed.

The door of the strong-room was a heavy old-fashioned affair, and if you have time to study it, and are patient enough, you can get the measure of any lock in the end. I had twice glimpsed the actual key, too, and that is a great help. It wasn't long before I had equipped myself with keys which I was pretty sure would open the door. The next thing was to find an opportunity to use them.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the end I hit on quite a simple plan.

At about three o'clock one afternoon I announced that I had an appointment with the local Inspector of Taxes. I thought it would take an hour or ninety minutes. Would it be all right if I went straight home? Mr. Portway agreed. He was in the middle of drafting a complicated conveyance, and looked safely anchored in his chair.

I went back to my room, picked up my hat, raincoat and briefcase, and tiptoed down to the basement. The secretarial staff was massacring a typewriter in the outer office.

Quietly I opened the door of one of the basement storage rooms; I had used my last few lunch breaks, when I was alone in the office, to construct myself a hideaway, by moving a rampart of deed boxes a couple of feet out from the wall, and building up the top with bundles of old papers. Now I shut the door behind me, and squeezed carefully into my lair. Apart from the fact that the fresh dust I had disturbed made me want to sneeze, it wasn't too bad. Soon the dust particles resettled themselves, and I fell into a state of somnolence.

It was five o'clock before I heard Mr. Portway moving. His footsteps came down the passage outside, and stopped. I heard him open the door of the other strong-room opposite. A pause. The door shut again. The next moment my door opened and the lights sprang on.

I held my breath. The lights went out and the door shut. I heard the click of the key in the lock. Then the footsteps moved away.

He was certainly thorough. I even heard him look into the lavatory. (My first plan had been to lock myself in it. I was glad now that I had not.) At last the steps moved away upstairs; more pottering about, the big outer door slammed shut, and silence came down like a blanket.

I let it wait for an hour or two. The trouble was the cleaner, an erratic lady called Gertie. She had a key of her own and sometimes she came in the evening and sometimes early in the morning. I had studied her movements for several weeks. The latest she had left the premises was a quarter to eight at night.

By half past eight I felt it was safe for me to start moving.

The room door presented no difficulties. The lock was on my side, and I simply unscrewed it. The strong-room door was a different matter. I had got what is known in the trade as a set of "approximates," which are blank keys of the type and, roughly, the shape to open a given lock. My job was to find the one that worked best, and then file it down and fiddle it until it would open the lock. You can't do this with a modern lock,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which is tooled to a hundredth of an inch, but old locks, which rely on complicated convolutions and strong springs, though they look formidable, are actually much easier.

By half past ten I heard the sweet click which means success, and I swung the steel door open, turned on the light switch, and stepped in.

It was a small vault with walls of whitewashed brick, with a run of wooden shelves round two of the sides carrying a line of black deed boxes. I didn't waste much time on them. I guessed the sort of things they would contain.

On the left, behind the door, was a table. On the table stood a heavy brass-bound, teak box: the sort of thing that might have been built to contain a microscope, only larger. It was locked, and this was a small Bramah-type lock which none of my implements were really designed to cope with.

I worked for some time at it, but without a lot of hope. The only solution seemed to be to lug the box away with me—it was very heavy, but just portable—and get someone to work on it. I reflected that I should look pretty silly if it did turn out to be a valuable microscope that one of old Portway's clients had left with him for safe keeping.

Then I had an idea. On the shelf inside the door was a small black tin box with *E. Portway. Personal* painted on the front.

It was the sort of thing a careful man might keep his Savings Certificates and passport in. It too was locked, but with an ordinary deed-box lock, which one of the keys on my ring fitted. I opened it and, sure enough, lying on top of the stacked papers in it, the first thing that caught my eye was a worn leather key-holder containing a single, brass Bramah key.

I suddenly felt a little breathless. Perhaps the ventilation in that underground room was not all that it should have been. Moving with deliberation I fitted the brass key into the tiny keyhole, pressed home, and twisted. Then I lifted the top of the box. And came face to face with Mr. Portway's secret.

At first sight it was disappointing. It looked like nothing more than a handpress. The sort of thing you use for impressing a company seal, only larger. I lifted it out, picked up a piece of clean white paper off the shelf, slid it in, and pressed down the handle. Then I released it and extracted the paper.

Imprinted on it was a neat, orange Revenue stamp for £20. I went back to the box. Inside was a tray, and arranged in it stamps of various denominations, starting at 10s., £1, £2, and £5, and so on upwards. The largest was for £100.

I picked one out and held it up to the light. It was beautifully

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

made. Mr. Portway had not wasted his time at Bertolozzi's Florentine atelier. There was even an arrangement of cogs behind each stamp by which the three figures of the date could be set; tiny, delicate wheels, each a masterpiece of the watchmaker's art.

I heard the footsteps crossing the courtyard, and Mr. Portway was through the door before I even had time to put down the seal I was holding.

"What are you doing here?" I said stupidly.

"When anyone turns on the strong-room light," he said, "it turns on the light in my office, too. I've a private arrangement with the caretaker of the big block at the end who keeps an eye open for me. If she sees my light on, she telephones me."

"I see," I said. Once I had got over the actual shock of seeing him there I wasn't alarmed. I was half his age and twice his size. "I've been admiring your homework. Every man his own stamp office. A lovely piece of work."

"Is it not?" agreed Mr. Portway, blinking at me under the strong light. I could read in his Chelonian face neither fear nor anger. Rather a sardonic amusement at the turn of affairs. "Are you a private detective, by any chance?"

I told him who I was.

"You have been admiring my little machine?"

"My only real surprise is that no one has thought of it before."

"Yes," he said. "It's very useful. To a practising solicitor, of course. I used to find it a permanent source of irritation that my clients should pay more to the Government—who, after all, hadn't raised a finger to earn it—than they did to me. Do you realise that if I act for the purchase of a London house for £5,000, I get about £43, while the Government's share is £100?"

"Scandalous," I agreed. "And so you devised this little machine to adjust the balance. Such a simple and foolproof form of forgery, when you come to think of it." The more I thought of it the more I liked it. "Just think of the effort you would have to expend—to say nothing of stocks of special paper—if you set out to forge a hundred one-pound notes. Whereas with this machine—a small die—a simple pressure."

"Oh, there's more to it than that," said Mr. Portway. "A man would be a fool to forge Treasury notes. They have to be passed into circulation, and each one is a potential danger to its maker. Here, when I have stamped a document, it goes into a deed box. It may not be looked at again for twenty years. Possibly never."

"As a professional accountant," I said, "I am not sure that

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that angle is not the one that appeals to me most. Let me see. Take that purchase you were talking about. Your client would give you two cheques, one for your costs, which goes through the books in the ordinary way, and a separate one for the stamp duty."

"Made out to cash."

"Made out to cash, of course. Which you would yourself cash at the bank. Then come back here—"

"I always took the trouble to walk through the Stamp Office in case anyone should be watching me."

"Very sound," I said. "Then you came back here, stamped the document yourself that evening, and put the money in your pocket. It never appeared in your books at all."

"That's right," said Mr. Portway. He seemed gratified at the speed with which I had perceived the finer points of his arrangements.

"There's only one thing I can't quite see," I said. "You're a bachelor, a man with simple tastes. Could you not—I don't want to sound pompous—by working a little harder, have made sufficient money legitimately for your reasonable needs?"

Mr. Portway looked at me for a moment, his smile broadening.

"I see," he said, "that you have not had time to examine the rest of my strong-room. My tastes are far from simple, and owing to the scandalous and confiscatory nature of modern taxation—oh, I beg your pardon. I was forgetting for the moment—"

"Don't apologise," I said. "I have often thought the same thing myself. You were speaking of expensive tastes."

Mr. Portway stepped over to a large drop-fronted deed box, labelled *Lord Lampeter's Settled Estate*, and unlocked it with a key from a chain. Inside was a rack, and in the rack I counted the dusty ends of two dozen bottles.

"Château Margaux. The 1934 vintage. I shouldn't say that even now it has reached its peak. Now here"—he unlocked *The Dean of Melchester. Family Affairs*—"I have a real treasure. A Mouton-Rothschild of 1924."

"1924!"

"In magnums. I know that you appreciate a good wine. Since this may perhaps be our last opportunity—"

"Well—"

Mr. Portway took a corkscrew, a decanter, and two glasses from a small cupboard labelled *Estate Duty Forms. Miscellaneous*, drew the cork of the Mouton-Rothschild with care and skill, and decanted it with a steady hand. Then he poured two glasses. We both held it up to the single unshaded light to note the dark,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rich, almost black colour, and took our first, ecstatic mouthful. It went down like oiled silk.

"What did you say you had in the other boxes?" I inquired reverently.

"My preference has been for the clarets," said Mr. Portway. "Of course, as I only really started buying in 1945 I have nothing that you could call a museum piece. But I picked up a small lot of 1927 Château Talbot which has to be tasted to be believed. And if a good burgundy was offered, I didn't say no to it." He gestured towards *The Marchioness of Gravesend* in the corner. "There's a 1937 Romanée Conti—but your glass is empty . . ."

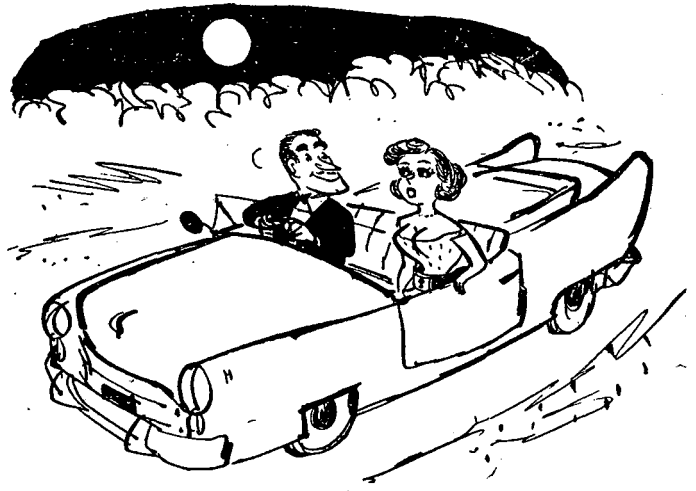
As we finished the Mouton-Rothschild in companionable silence I looked at my watch. It was two o'clock in the morning.

"You will scarcely find any transport to get you home now," said Mr. Portway. "Might I suggest that the only thing to follow a fine claret is a noble burgundy."

"Well—" I said. I was fully aware that I was compromising my official position, but it hardly seemed to matter. Actually I think my mind had long since been made up. As dawn was breaking, and the Romanée Conti was sinking in the bottle, we agreed provisional articles of partnership.

The name of the firm is Portway & Gilbert of 7 Lombards Inn.

If you are thinking, by any chance, of buying a house—



"Are you sure this locked-by-key safety-belt is safer?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

healing knife

Surgeon to anaesthetist: "I don't know how the patient is doing at your end, Mr. Jones, but he appears to be dead at mine."

ALEXIS THOMSON

Surgical Spirit

"Nothing like dissecting, to give one an appetite," said Mr. Bob Sawyer, looking round the table.

Mr. Pickwick slightly shuddered.

"By the bye, Bob, have you finished that leg yet?"

"Nearly," replied Sawyer, helping himself to half a fowl as he spoke. "It's a very muscular one for a child's . . ."

"I've put my name down for an arm, at our place," said Mr. Allen. ". . . We can't get hold of any fellow that wants a head. I wish you'd take it."

"No," replied Bob Sawyer; "can't afford expensive luxuries . . . . I wouldn't mind a brain but I can't afford a whole head."

"Hush, hush, gentlemen, pray," said Mr. Pickwick. "I hear the ladies."

CHARLES DICKENS, *The Pickwick Papers*

O William Dear!

O William dear! O William dear!
My rest eternal ceases;
Alas my everlasting peace
Is broken into pieces . . .

I vowed that you should have my hand,
But fate gives us denial;
You'll find it there at Dr. Bell's
In spirits and a phial.

I can't tell where my head is gone,
But Dr. Carpue can;
As for my trunk, it's all packed up
To go by Pickford's van.

THOMAS HOOD, *Mary's Ghost*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stripped for Action

" You will hardly believe it but this is my first important case of surgery in a nearly three years' cruise . . ."

And so saying, the knife and carver touchingly dropped to his side, and he stood for a moment fixed in a tender reverie. But a commotion being heard beyond the curtain, he started, and, briskly crossing and recrossing the knife and carver, exclaimed, "Ah, here comes our patient; surgeons, this side of the table, if you please; young gentlemen, a little further off, I beg. Steward, take off my coat—so; my neckerchief now; I must be perfectly unencumbered . . ."

These articles being removed, he snatched off his wig, placing it on the gun-deck capstan; then took out his set of false teeth, and placed it by the side of the wig; and, lastly, putting his forefinger to the inner angle of his blind eye, spirted out the glass object with professional dexterity, and deposited that, also, next to the wig and false-teeth.

HERMAN MELVILLE, *White-Jacket*

Self Service

12 *midday: I am sitting alone in my little room at the nursing home waiting to be called to the operating theatre. They have given me an injection . . .*

12.05 *p.m. I am still waiting. The matron, smiling the forced, fixed, eternal, irremovable, come-let-us-be-cheerful smile worn by all matrons in front of all patients, says, " How do you feel?"*

" Like a rat in a trap," I reply.

The matron, shocked, but still smiling, goes out.

12.30 *p.m. There is a tap on the door. " They are ready for you . . ."*

12.35 *p.m. I refuse to travel on the trolley. I am not a cripple. I am not even ill—yet. So I push the trolley myself. The nurses laugh. When I arrive in the theatre pushing my trolley, the surgeons and the doctors laugh. Patients must be humoured. Brightness is everything.* NATHANIEL GUBBINS, *The Diary of a Worm*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the cat who sang

By

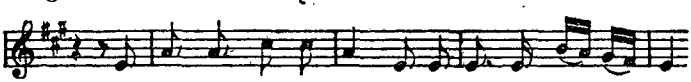
H. E. BATES

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WILFRED WHITMORE, who was exceptionally fond of music and taught Latin and Greek at a local school for boys, had overworked himself so much during the hot summer term that he began, about the middle of August, to suffer from odd hallucinations.

Once he believed himself, very briefly, to be Octavius Caesar and that he was eating large quantities of green figs and snails under the shade of an enormous cedar tree. Another time he was a Greek athlete, always in pursuit of other athletes or running away from them, along cruelly brilliant stony distances.

Finally, after a too heavy lunch of sausages and mashed, fried onions, and apple pie and cream, he fell asleep at his flat, in an old rocking-chair, to wake suddenly under the powerful impression that his cat Susie was actually singing Schubert's *Die Forelle*, *The Trout*, or at least that particular passage in it that goes like this:



At first he thought that this was merely part of a waking dream, but when he at last sat up and heard with amazed and fully awakened ears Susie's unmistakable rendering of the song he was so excited that he rushed straight to the telephone without thinking there was anything absurd about the whole affair and immediately rang his fiancée, Shirley Baines, who worked as secretary to the general manager of a local paint factory.

Miss Baines, who was hard at it in the middle of an unbearably hot afternoon, typing letters and desperately longing for a stir of breeze to drive some of the acrid odour of emulsion paints from the humid air, was not particularly pleased to be interrupted.

"But she sings, I tell you. No mistaking it. Positively sings."

"Who on earth are you talking about?"

"It was just after two o'clock. I'd given her a nice lunch and suddenly she sat up and started. Clear as a bell. Just as if she'd learnt it all off by heart."

"For goodness' sake can't you tell me who you're talking about?"

"Susie. Didn't I say Susie?"

"No, you didn't. And what's more I don't like being interrupted at the office. I've told you before—"

"What makes it all the more exciting is that she doesn't just sing any old piece. She's shown taste—it's that awfully nice thing of Schubert's, *The Trout*, the bit that goes like—"

Wilfred suddenly began to hum over the telephone, in a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rather uncertain tenor, the relevant passage from the song. At the end, trying to round off with a few bars of the accompaniment, he gave what seemed to be a series of hiccups, so that Miss Baines had great difficulty in restraining an impulse to ask him how long he'd been drinking. She remembered in time that Wilfred never drank and she could only suppose that the unbearable heat of the afternoon had in some way affected him. He'd been a little strange lately.

"And it wasn't as if she sang it just once. Then I *might* have been mistaken. But she sang it three times—two encores, note for note the same."

"In the right key too, I suppose?"

"Absolutely."

"Of course you'll put her on television at once."

Something in the tone of Miss Baines' voice jolted his enthusiasm sadly.

"You sound a bit peeved. Don't you believe me?"

"Of course I do. Tomorrow you'll be telling me she plays the trombone. What's the matter with you? You must have been sitting out in the sun. You've been acting a bit odd lately—"

"I have not been sitting out in the sun."

"Then what's the matter with you? It all sounds terribly fishy to me."

In cold, level tones Wilfred said that if that was her idea of a joke he didn't think it was a particularly good one.

"And I can't say I think it much of a joke to be rung up in the middle of a scorching afternoon to be told about cats singing Schubert."

"It is not a joke. It's deadly serious. Don't you realise? Susie's a singing cat. A phenomenon. I've got a phenomenal, wonderful creature on my hands."

"Well, you haven't got me on them, because I've got work to do, and if I don't do it I'll be here all night."

"Very well. Will I see you tonight?"

"I thought that was the idea."

"Perhaps you'll come to the flat and hear Susie sing?"

"If she's still at it I will. In the meantime you'll probably find she's got a bone stuck in her throat or something and it's that what's causing it. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," Wilfred said, and then in a sudden spasm of anxiety rushed to the kitchen, half afraid that Miss Baines' painfully jocular words might be true. But to his great relief Susie was asleep under the table, a passive ball of smooth black fur.

"They don't believe us, Susie," he said. "They don't

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

believe about you. But I'm sure Schubert would have. And so will they. I'll make them."

Back in the office Miss Baines tried vainly to repress the rising edges of her temper. She felt as if a hot iron had been run over her neck and she at once made several mistakes on the typewriter. Her hands felt repulsively clammy as she worked with her indiarubber to erase the misspelt words.

Finally she gave the typewriter a bang of near exquisite anger, snatched up her handbag and went first to the washroom to rinse her hands and make up her face and then down to the first floor canteen to get herself a drink of something cool.

"Hullo. You look as if you've been having a dust-up with somebody. Robbie?"

Dawn Edwards, who changed the colour of her hair twice a month, sometimes to a deep-sea blue or to a shade rather like that of an under-ripe tomato, sat at a plastic-topped table sipping at a glass of cold milk. Robbie was Mr. Robertson, the general manager. Miss Edwards was secretary to a Mr. Watt-Forbes, whom she called Old What-not, in accountancy. Today Miss Edwards' hair was a strange shade of gold-green, rather like that seen in certain mosses after a dry summer.

"Robbie's gone swimming, lucky devil. I'd give something to be in that water."

"I wish Old What-not would take a dive. He never lets up. Who were you fighting with?"

Miss Baines, who was now sipping cold orange juice, explained that she'd been fighting with Wilfred, over the telephone. It had made her very cross too.

"Not like you two, is it? You don't often have dust-ups."

"No. But this was plain ridiculous."

Miss Edwards thought for a moment, staring at Miss Baines' hair, which was a pleasant natural shade of dark brown, and then said she thought it mightn't be a bad idea if she tinted it for a change—say red or cocoa. It was wonderful what a change of colour did to men. They started to look at you in quite a different way.

"He's gone completely barmy about a cat. Completely off his rocker."

"In what way?"

"It sings."

Dawn Edwards started laughing, rather shrilly.

"Oh, they all do that! I hear them all night long on the roof next to ours. You want to throw cold water on them."

"This one's different. It sings Schubert."

"Oh, classical! No rock 'n' roll?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Nothing so common. And he made such a fuss about it too. I never heard of anything so ridiculous."

Miss Edwards pondered again, staring hard at Shirley's hair. A nice shade of light cocoa would do a lot for it, she thought.

"I don't know that it's so ridiculous. After all they get dogs to count. I saw one once on television."

"There's a big difference between barking a few times and singing Schubert's *The Trout* in the right key."

"Yes, but they get elephants to dance in circuses and all that. That must be difficult. And what about those porpoises or whatever they're called? They're almost human."

Miss Baines suddenly drained her orange juice and said she must get back to the grindstone or she'd be there till the cows came home.

"The thing that made me feel so mad was that you'd think the wretched animal was far more important than I was."

Dawn Edwards laughed again and said that a situation like that called for something drastic. She urged Shirley once again to do something for her hair: say a nice cocoa or squirrel red or milk chocolate or something of that sort.

Two hours later, when Miss Edwards left the office, sharp on five, she was surprised to see Wilfred Whitmore standing outside the paint factory gates, waiting for Shirley Baines. Wilfred was very thin and tall and rather fragile of appearance. She thought he looked tired. His skin looked rather like greasy parchment and his longish blond eyebrows were so pale as to seem almost as if dipped in salt.

"Oh, Wilfred, I've been hearing about your marvellous cat."

"You have?"

"I think it's terrific. No wonder you're excited."

"You mean you actually think Susie *can* sing? You don't think it's a joke?"

"Of course I don't. As I said to Shirley, they get dogs to count numbers and all that. And you see elephants dancing to tunes. And bears. And you can get budgerigars to say anything."

Wilfred said he could quite see that at first sight it seemed a little far-fetched that a cat should suddenly start singing, and Schubert at that, but when you thought about it a bit it really wasn't. After all there'd long been a theory that cats were in some way the reincarnation of human beings—it was what made them so close to man and so sagacious—and who could say whether Susie wasn't in fact a reincarnation of someone who had lived

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in Vienna in Schubert's time? Perhaps a person of some eminence, above the common rut; perhaps one of Schubert's friends?

Miss Edwards' eyes, which were a sort of golden toffee colour, seemed almost to melt as she listened to this theory, and she could think of nothing to say except, " And of course she could always have heard it on a record."

" Yes, of course. Why not? I'd never thought of that."

At this moment some instinct made Miss Edwards turn her head, just in time to see Shirley Baines leaving the front door of the office. With the lightest of fingers she touched the side of her mossy hair and gave Wilfred Whitmore a final gaze with her buttery golden eyes, saying, "Anyway I'd love to hear her some time."

" You honestly would? Really? "

" Of course. I'd adore it. It would be marvellous." She smiled with sudden beatific warmth, so that Wilfred was momentarily embalmed in a daze. " Whenever it's convenient, I mean. Well, I must rush now."

" I'll let you know. I'll let you know."

After a bare, brief hullo to each other Wilfred Whitmore and Miss Baines walked away from the paint factory, silently. The white pavements seemed to dance with heat. Miss Baines felt herself longing for an ice-cream as big as a clock tower and for somewhere cool to swim.

" You didn't say you were coming to meet me out."

" No, but I wanted to go to the fishmonger's for Susie and I thought I'd do the two things together."

A burst of fury rushed Miss Baines. Her words were drops of strychnine. " Of course you've bought her trout."

Wilfred felt himself bounce off the pavement. For fully half a minute he seemed to soar somewhere far away from Miss Baines, floating in an icy sky. At the same time he suddenly recalled Dawn Edwards, her warm enthusiasm for Susie and the friendliness, almost the fondness, of her buttery golden eyes.

" Look, I know you're sceptical about all this. I know you don't believe me. All I ask is that you should come back to the flat and hear Susie for yourself. She's sung the same passage five times again already this afternoon."

" Thanks. There's only two things I want at the moment. A good long cold drink or an ice and somewhere to swim."

" I've got plenty of drink and plenty of ice at the flat and you can have a shower."

" All right. Let's get it over with. Don't let's keep the prima donna waiting."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

At the flat Miss Baines declined the offer of a shower and merely sat in the living-room with an air of martyred discomfort, in the rocking-chair, sipping a large gin-and-tonic from a frosty glass. Susie was still in the kitchen.

"I won't bring her in till she's finished her supper. She seems to do it better after food."

"Unlike most other singers."

"Oh, and by the way, I rang up the vet and told him all about it. He says he's never heard of a phenomenon like it and he's coming round first thing tomorrow to have a good look at her vocal chords."

"Oh, ridiculous! It's probably croup or some sort of disease."

"Well, it may be. We don't know. After all, tenor-singing is a disease."

"Oh, is it? I never heard."

Five minutes later, after charging Miss Baines' glass, Wilfred went into the kitchen and brought back Susie, who seemed dazed, even dopey, from too much food.

Miss Baines applauded the entrance pertly.

"Oh, don't do that. You'll put her off."

"It's the usual thing to applaud the artist, isn't it?"

"Yes, but not this one. Just let her alone. Let her take her time. She'll do it in her own good time."

Miss Baines laughed shortly, in rather a gritty sort of way.

"I suppose she isn't expecting kittens or anything? Then we could have a choir."

Wilfred could find no answer to this and sat in deeply repressed silence, watching Susie, who was now sitting on a sofa and licking her paws and reflectively washing her face with them. In impatience Miss Baines tinkled the ice sharply against the side of her glass, disturbing Susie, so that she looked quickly up.

"Sssh! Don't move. She's going to start."

Suddenly Susie began to make strange sounds, at first sotto voce, then more loudly, on a rising, piercing scale. The inharmonious nature of the notes seemed utterly to fascinate Wilfred Whitmore, who sat enthralled, open-mouthed, eyebrows seemingly bristled with excitement, his two hands gently beating enthusiastic time.

"There it is. That's it. That's the Schubert bit." His voice was the merest thistledown of a whisper. "Dah—dah—dah dah!—hear it? That's *The Trout*."

To Miss Baines the sounds were like the unbottled echoes

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of distant caterwaulings on cold moonlight nights. She longed to hurl the contents of her glass at Susie, who seemed to be in mortal pain. Instead she drained the contents of the glass herself, slammed the glass down on the top of Wilfred Whitmore's upright piano, and got up. "I've just about had enough of this nonsense. I'm off. You're heading for a nervous breakdown."

"Now don't go. Don't rush off. Give her a chance. She's only just started. That was just a sort of dummy run."

"Dummy, my foot. You'll be telling me next she knows the difference between a diminished fifth and a cork leg—"

"Look, I'm convinced the root of all this lies in some sort of reincarnation."

"Oh, you are? Well, I'll tell you what. You get the vet to look at you in the morning. Not her."

"Now please. Don't rush off like that. Will I see you tomorrow?"

Miss Baines abruptly left without an answer. The door of the flat slammed with a cold rattle—a sound that Wilfred Whitmore felt he could still hear as he paced up and down outside the gates of the paint factory at lunchtime next day.

"Oh, it's you, Mr. Whitmore. I thought for a moment it couldn't possibly be. We don't often see you at lunchtime."

He turned to see Dawn Edwards, who had been wondering most of the morning what colour she should dye her hair next. She was getting rather tired of the golden-green.

"You've no idea when Shirley might be coming out to lunch, I suppose?"

"She's taking lunch late today. Mr. Robertson's dictating letters till two o'clock. He wants to get away early for the weekend."

Wilfred Whitmore's face seemed sad, even depressed, at the news.

"You look rather down in the dumps. It isn't your cat, is it? How is she today?"

"Oh, she's very well, thank you."

"Still singing?"

"As a matter of fact I think she's singing better than ever."

"In really good voice, eh? How wonderful. I'd love to hear her. You did say I could some time."

"Of course. By the way I had the vet to her this morning."

"And what did he say?"

"I don't think he's very musical. He didn't strike me as having much taste."

"Oh, you never know with those fellows. They look at everything so scientifically."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Miss Edwards' eyes seemed to melt as she said this. A sympathetic glow seemed to spread across her face, prompting Wilfred Whitmore to say, " I don't know how you're fixed for time. I don't want to upset your lunch hour but it wouldn't take five minutes if you wanted to hear Susie now."

" Oh goodness, I'd love to."

At the flat Wilfred Whitmore set Susie on a yellow cushion, in the middle of the sofa, and again she gently washed her face with her paws before suddenly beginning to make the strange sotto voce sounds, rising to a piercing crescendo, that had seemed to Shirley Baines like nothing more than the unbottled echoes of distant caterwaulings on cold moonlight nights.

This is exactly what they seemed like to Dawn Edwards too. She thought the noise too ghastly for words but she merely transfixed the black, crying figure of Susie with her melting buttery eyes and said, " But it's beautiful. She's a soprano too."

" You recognise the Schubert? You know the song? "

" Of course. I used to play it a bit at one time."

" You did? You don't sing as well, I suppose? "

" I used to. I was in the school choir and then later—"

" If I played would you sing the Schubert? *The Trout*, I mean. It would be rather nice."

" I couldn't today. I haven't got the time today."

" What about tomorrow? "

" I've got to have my hair done tomorrow. It takes hours."

" Well, Sunday then? "

Before answering him Dawn Edwards leaned down and began to stroke Susie's black soft fur with the back of one hand. Against the bright yellow cushion the blackness of the fur seemed of unusual depth and brilliance, and she said, " Do you like black? I mean, not just in cats. I mean, does it sort of do something to you? "

How could she possibly know? he thought. He would never have guessed she was a girl of such perception. She didn't look the type, and he was delighted when she said, "All right, Sunday then. If you're sure that's all right? I mean, what about Shirley? "

" We haven't arranged anything for Sunday. And even if we had—"

" All right, let's make it Sunday. Make it the evening, shall we? About six."

" About six. And I'm thrilled you've heard Susie. I'm thrilled you like her."

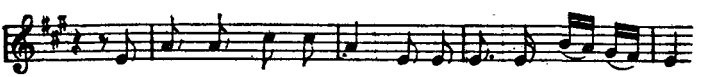
" Like her ? " Again the melting buttery eyes spread their warmth. " If I sing it half as well I'll be satisfied."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When she arrived back at the flat on Sunday evening, thirty-five minutes late, Wilfred Whitmore found it for some moments hard to recognise her. The head of mossy golden hair, lightly shot with green, had disappeared. The sensational glowing black mane that had replaced it had a passionate depth in it and a strange light that smouldered at the edges with a touch of midnight blue. It seemed even richer and softer than Susie's fur.

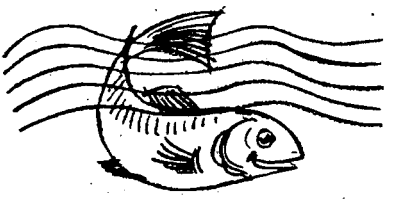
Throughout the evening Dawn Edwards alternately drank gin-and-tonic and sang, in a very light soprano, brief snatches of Schubert. Wilfred Whitmore caressed the notes of the piano with vibrant hands. The evening grew dark and finally, as he and Dawn Edwards sat on the sofa together, he found himself caught up in yet another momentary hallucination. It was that Susie was ever so gently caressing his face with her fur. It was some time before he discovered, with an explosive jolt of excitement, that it was really Dawn Edwards' black, sensational hair.

Dawn Edwards is now Mrs. Whitmore. Miss Baines continues to work at the paint factory. There is a certain brittleness in her manner and a certain aloofness, almost hauteur, in her bearing. She becomes increasingly irritated by Mr. Robertson and he, in turn, by her. In order to sleep at night she takes increasing doses of phenobarbitone which in turn, as time goes on, have a diminishing effect on her.

Sleeplessly she lies and thinks of Wilfred Whitmore, Susie and Susie's strange cold discords. There frequently runs through her mind the whole of *Die Forelle*, *The Trout*—of which she now has a gramophone record—and particularly that beautiful passage in it that starts

And over and over again, as she hears it and sees in imagination the trout turning in its rippling waters, she wonders why cats are so popular.

More especially those who sing.

© Evensford Productions Ltd. 1963



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MALICE

"THE malice of the soul," wrote John Trevisa in the fourteenth century—though I believe he translated the passage from an earlier writer in Latin—"the malice of the soul is more in a woman than in a man." I do not like to think that this is true, but certainly the story of Rosa Beaumont and Joe Booth seems at first sight to be an illustration of the statement. Although Rosa spoke to Booth only three times from their meeting till the day of her death, she ruined his life, made it continually bitter to him; it is possible too that in some small measure she was responsible for the disaster which presently overtook the whole Yarrow valley.

It all began one pleasant summer Sunday afternoon in the mid-1840s. A great many people from down the valley were standing along the hillsides gazing across the calm sunny waters of the Ling reservoir. Water—soft, limeless water—is an absolute essential for textile processes, and the hills and moors of the millstone grit Pennines with their heavy rainfall are admirable gathering grounds. Accordingly, a few years earlier all the Yarrow valley millowners had eagerly supported this big reservoir project. To build an embankment across the narrow head of the steep valley, just below the confluence of two strongly tumbling streams, with two culverts and a wooden channel to carry the outward flow straight down the valley, seemed a simple way of securing for them the regular and powerful water supply they all required for their cloth manufacture. A bill for the construction of eight reservoirs was presented in Parliament and passed; commissioners were elected, land acquired, the embankment constructed; "drawers" appointed to regulate the outward flow of water by appropriately placed valves.

The area and content of this Ling reservoir were found to be so satisfactorily large that the building of any further reservoirs was dispensed with; Ling was enough. The manufacturers whose mills were strung down the long valley towards the neighbouring town of Annotsfield paid rates to the commissioners for the use of the water and were well pleased with their bargain.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

by **PHYLLIS BENTLEY**

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Recently, however, the great containing embankment had been behaving ill. Steep and stone-faced within, on the outer side this wall was covered in grass and earth and sloped more mildly down to the fields far below. Its top, eight feet broad, formed an agreeable promenade this sunny afternoon, except that here and there the surface had sunk a little—in one place indeed it had sunk a good deal. On this promenade were walking at present a good many of the original commissioners with their wives and families; they paused, prodded the earth with their walking-sticks, and pointed to a tiresome small stream emerging, on the left as one looked down the valley, fifteen or twenty yards below the foot of the embankment. This stream, it appeared, was alleged by the drawers of the reservoir to be the cause of the subsidence in the embankment. It was evident that workers from Yarrow, Yarrowfirth, and Yarrowfield, the villages down the valley, had heard rumours of defects in the embankment, for there they all were in their Sunday clothes, standing on the steep slopes whose bases formed the sides of the reservoir, their children scrambling and screaming along the rough paths, threatening at any moment to fall into the water but somehow always being hauled back to safety at the last moment by irate mothers.

Among the commissioners on the embankment stood Rosa Beaumont and her father. Most of the men came and had a word with them, not only because Thomas Beaumont owned the largest mill in the valley, was a magistrate and an influential member of the reservoir commission, but because of Rosa's outstanding attractions. A tall, finely made girl, with a brilliantly pale complexion, glorious blue eyes, and a mass of vivid red-gold hair—it was said that her hair was so long, so abundant, that she could easily sit on it, and this was in fact true—Rosa was also agreeably social; she had a witty tongue, talked well, and knew how to flatter the opposite sex by deferential agreement at the right moment. She dressed in good taste, had a ringing laugh, enjoyed superb health, and had been well educated, for a girl of that period, in a very expensive boarding-school in London.

It was a downright shame, said the men, that such a handsome, lively girl should be tied to her mother's bedside. Mrs. Beaumont, a plain large-boned woman with fine eyes, of a good East Yorkshire family, had done something to her spine as she slipped on the steep steps from the hillside down to Mill House, returning from one of her errands of charity. So there she lay, had lain these last many years, on bed or couch, with her daughter and a maid to look after her. Not that these filial duties seemed to keep Rosa away from social enjoyments, however, observed the women

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

acidly. The women indeed generally liked Mrs. Beaumont; the men thought her rather dreary, and commended her husband's decorous fidelity, with their tongue perhaps a little in their cheek.

For as regards Thomas Beaumont, they did not much care for him—short and bald and pompous and thinking rather more of himself than was necessary even if his family had lived in the valley for two or three generations and owned land. They privately jeered a little at his finicky way of speaking. At the same time they had to admit that he was a shrewd man of business; he had enlarged Beaumont Mill, built a new dyehouse across the river, and a row of cottages halfway down the hillside just beyond his own mansion, for his workers.

Yes, there was more in Thomas Beaumont than met the eye; must be. His gold watch-chain had cost a pound a link. Pity he had no son to carry on the name and the business. He'd be marrying off his daughter to some suitable up-and-coming young manufacturer, no doubt, said the Yarrow valley men, directing their sons' attention to Rosa. Not that it needed much directing; her looks and her tongue drew plenty of young men around her. But to please Rosa and her father both, a young man would need to have all his wits about him; Rosa was no fool and her father doted on his daughter.

Now as the commissioners talking to her father, growing heated in argument, began to use technical phraseology incomprehensible to Rosa, her attention strayed, and glancing around for somebody more interesting she saw two persons standing near as if wishing to join the conversation. "Persons" was the suitable word—suitable, that is, for the use of Rosa, who had all the class feeling of the period—for they were obviously working men, dressed in their pathetic Sunday best. One was old, bent, grey, gnarled, weatherbeaten; the other, by his likeness obviously the son of the first, a tall strong young man. They had no business to be standing on the embankment, of course, thought Rosa, slightly tossing her head.

"Father," she said in a low tone, touching his arm.

Not averse to leaving the argument, for like everything else connected with Ling, he thought crossly, it had become irritating, Mr. Beaumont turned to her. Rosa with a glance indicated the father and son. To her surprise, Mr. Beaumont brightened, and took a step towards them. "Well, John! Well, Joe!" he said.

"My father would like to have a word with you about this here wall," said the young man. "To tell you what he thinks, like."

"Well, he should know better than anyone else, I suppose," said Mr. Beaumont. "Come on now, John; let's have it. What's making the wall sink, eh?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"It's yon spring," said the old man, pointing to the small stream on the left. "It's wrecking the puddle."

"How can it when it rises twenty yards away?"

"That isn't its natural place of rise," said the old man, shaking his head. "It rises right under the embankment. Them as built the wall tried to push it down and block it off, I reckon; but there it is, you see."

"This is all supposition," said one of the other commissioners angrily. "We can't pull the whole embankment down and spend another forty thousand pounds for a wild notion about a spring."

"We can't, because we haven't got forty thousand pounds to spend," said another sardonically.

"We can't leave it as it is, however," said a third.

"Why not?"

"Well, us don't want wall to fall down, I take it."

"That's all fiddle faddle."

"John Booth is the drawer here and visits the reservoir every day, so we ought to hear what he has to say," interrupted Mr. Beaumont authoritatively. "What makes you think the spring is undermining the embankment, John?"

"Watter in t'spring is always coloured, like—muddy," said John. "There's puddle in it, Mester Beaumont. Where did clay come from, if not from what's in the wall?"

All this is Greek to me, thought Rosa impatiently. She turned abruptly aside, and found herself face to face at close quarters with John's son.

All accounts describe Joe Booth as a good-looking young man, shapely in figure, with large brown eyes and curly dark hair, but beyond all that as having something especially pleasant, kindly, goodnatured, so to say affectionate towards all, in his expression. He therefore appeared quite a suitable person for Miss Rosa Beaumont to address; not likely to be gross in speech, and intelligent enough to appreciate the honour. So she gave him a pleasant condescending smile, and was just about to speak to him when she saw a sudden change in his face. A half smile curved his handsome lips; the brown eyes glowed. Rosa was about to be astonished at his effrontery in looking at her like that, when she perceived that he was looking beyond her.

She turned. There a few yards away on the hillside stood an ordinary working girl: fairhaired, pink-cheeked, cheerful, tastelessly dressed, short, and solid. Joe Booth's beaming glance was for her, and she responded with the wide smile of assured love. Her teeth were poor, reflected Rosa, turning away in a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

fury. Such rudeness! To turn his attention from Miss Rosa Beaumont while she was speaking! How offensive! What were the lower classes coming to!

"I am tired, Father," she murmured in his ear.

"Yes—well—we must have a full commissioners' meeting soon," said Mr. Beaumont in a valedictory tone, stepping back from the group. "Take my arm, child. The matter is very serious, gentlemen, and needs careful thought. If large repairs to the embankment are really necessary, we shall have to consider drawing up another Bill."

"What? Another Parliamentary Bill?" cried some of the commissioners, aghast. "Never!"

"Nay, he's right."

"What, all those lawyers' fees again?"

"If the embankment is to be repaired, we shall need more money. We must be empowered to borrow again, and to levy a higher water rate."

"The Yarrow valley manufacturers won't pay it, and so I tell you straight."

"Do you propose to find the money yourselves, then?" said Mr. Beaumont stiffly. "For my part I am not prepared to make any further private investment."

"Aye, that's right. Me neither."

"Maybe, but we want no more Parliamentary Bills, choose how."

"Where are we to find the brass, without?"

"And who's to do the repairs? I make nowt of them engineers that built this wall and left a spring wandering about inside."

"They did their best, I reckon," said Mr. Booth mildly. "Maybe it's us backing up the two streams that started the spring, like."

"Well, it's a poor do."

"We must have a full meeting very soon," said Mr. Beaumont impatiently. "Meanwhile, I suggest that we instruct John Booth to keep a close watch on the embankment and the spring, and report to us every week. We must prepare a strong case to state in the Bill."

"No more Bills!" shouted several commissioners.

Mr. Beaumont walked away in a huff. His light springy step was always quick; now his daughter had to hurry to keep beside him. It was not because of this, however, that her cheek was hot and her breath quick.

"I should like to understand this matter thoroughly, Father," she panted when they had reached the lane.

"It is no concern of yours, my dear."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"But what is *puddle*? I always thought the word signified a pool."

"To puddle a wall or bank is to render it impervious to water. The word by a natural transition also means the material used in the process. The Ling embankment has a layer of puddle in its centre, along its whole length. If this puddle layer were to be broken, or removed, then the embankment would no longer be impervious to water. Water would seep through and weaken the whole structure."

"And old Booth says that tiresome spring is washing away the puddle?"

"Exactly. It is an extremely vexatious and costly situation."

"Father," said Rosa in the sugary, deferential tone she knew well how to assume, "you are so good, so honourable yourself that I think there is a possibility which has not occurred to you. To me it appeared at once that the old man Booth held a brief for the former engineers—the firm who built the embankment in the first place. A contract for massive repairs would be worth several thousand pounds to them, would it not? It would be well worth their while to sweeten John Booth, I imagine?"

"If I thought that!" exclaimed Mr. Beaumont, stopping abruptly. "But no—John and Joe Booth are both good workmen, very respectable. John worked for me for twenty years and Joe since he was a child—I've just made him foreman in the new dyehouse."

"Ah! I am mistaken, then. It was just that, hearing John Booth praise the firm who built the wall, I was made suspicious."

"He hardly praised them, my dear."

"He exonerated them from blame with regard to the spring."

"That's true," said Mr. Beaumont uneasily.

"I don't see why you should incur all the odium of forcing a Parliamentary Bill on unwilling colleagues in order that John Booth may earn a few shillings by bribery."

"They are very poor," said the harassed Mr. Beaumont, walking on.

"There you are then!" said Rosa triumphantly.

"There are a good many young children, and John's hand was pierced by a flying shuttle, so he cannot weave now. Joe has them all to keep."

"Is that why he isn't yet married to that lumpish girl?" said Rosa, her voice quivering with hate.

"Lizzie Lister? Yes, I imagine so. That's partly why I recommended old John for the drawer's job. Now he has that bit of money and Joe has a foreman's wage, they ought to be better able to manage. But if I thought—it certainly does seem

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strange—it's absurd to think that a spring twenty yards away could damage the wall."

"No one can possibly know what is happening inside the wall."

"Unfortunately that is so," said Mr. Beaumont with a sigh.

"To me the spring seemed to come from the direction of the hill slope above at the side," said Rosa hastily, seeing that she had made a mistake.

"Did it indeed? I must examine it again later," said Mr. Beaumont doubtfully.

"But not in John Booth's presence!" cried Rosa.

"No. No. Perhaps not. No," agreed her father.

Shortly after this conversation John Booth was dismissed from the drawer's job. He was too old for it, said Mr. Beaumont; too old and feeble—with that maimed hand too!—to manipulate the valves which sent the Ling water flowing down the valley or withheld it in the reservoir. He regretted having recommended him.

The trouble about the reservoir continued.

Mr. Beaumont, who had been expected to lead the movement for repair, seemed to have changed sides and deem it unnecessary, and men who would reluctantly have submitted to his demand for expenditure on repair because of his standing in the valley, now gladly followed his new line, which saved their pockets. They gloated over their surprised and resentful opponents, and thus the discussion became exacerbated. Arguments raged; men quarrelled; the original builders of the embankment hotly denied responsibility. More experienced engineers were sought; one gave advice and instruction which seemed to support John Booth's view of the matter; his instructions were privately countermanded by Mr. Beaumont and he left in a huff. The other commissioners fumed, for no Yorkshireman can bear to have his committee overridden. Eventually Mr. Beaumont was voted down and the decision taken to put forward a new Parliamentary Bill.

Lawyers were employed, the Bill was drawn, but at the last moment pronounced wrongly framed. Next session a freshly drawn Bill was at length presented; it passed the Commons but was thrown out by the Lords.

By this time the commissioners in general, and Mr. Beaumont in particular, were so exhausted by their protracted contention, so maddened by the mere sound of the word Ling, that they just let the whole matter drop. Some day they must have a meeting and take a decision, but for the present it was wisest, they said, to wait a while, give all the members a chance of cooling down.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Besides, as it chanced, this summer brought a drought and the intrusive spring dried up. They sighed thankfully and left Ling alone.

Meanwhile the centre section of the Ling embankment sank slowly but steadily lower.

Rosa of course was not interested in Ling reservoir, except that the tiresome place was connected in her mind with the Booths and so she hated it. What interested her, it seemed, were errands of charity or friendship up or down the valley on both sides of the Yarrow.

A stone packhorse bridge crossed the little river just above her father's mansion beneath the hill; on the other side the cobbled lane, before turning sharply up to the main road, was lined by Mr. Beaumont's new dyehouse. Passing along the lane one would naturally sometimes encounter the dyehouse foreman. This happened one autumn afternoon. In his dirty, rough mill clothes, striped apron, and wooden clogs, Joe Booth still had an air of refinement and goodwill. He smiled and touched his cap. His hands, stained with blue dye, remained well-shaped and slender. Rosa looked through him coldly and walked on. Her heart beat fast, her cheek flushed, she felt as if she had won some notable victory.

"Does that dark blue dye stain hands permanently, Father?" she inquired that night.

"Indigo? Oh, it wears off," said her father indifferently. "In time, of course. It takes time."

When Rosa next passed the shed, Joe was standing in the doorway talking to a lad; as she approached he broke off their talk abruptly and went in. Rosa was furious.

"Ask Joe Booth to come here at once," she commanded the lad. He gave her a frightened glance and ran away.

"You wanted me, Miss Rosa?" said Joe Booth at her elbow.

How dare he call her by her name! Impertinent! Yet one must be fair: all my father's workpeople know my name, Rosa told herself with a sense of virtue. She smiled; her smile seemed charming; childlike and sweet.

"Is my father in the dyehouse?" she asked. She knew perfectly well he was not; she had left him asleep by the fire at home.

"Well, no, I'm sorry, he's not," said Joe Booth. "I'm sorry." He seemed really distressed that he could not produce her father for her. "I could send a lad across to the mill to fetch him," he offered eagerly.

"No. It's no matter. Thank you. I just remembered

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

something I had forgotten," said Rosa, laughing, "which I wanted to tell him. It's no matter."

He smiled, enjoying her laughter—she had a pretty laugh. She nodded and passed on.

That evening Rosa was at her sweetest. She read to her mother, lying in bed upstairs, fetched her father's slippers, sang to him the old-fashioned ballads he preferred. Her handsome face looked softly happy in the firelight.

"How many children have the Booths, Father?" she asked in an idle tone.

Her father sat up briskly and showed alarm.

"For heaven's sake, Rosa," he urged, "don't mention the Booths' children in front of your mother. Mrs. Booth lost one of them, the next to Joe I think, at birth. It was as your mother returned from a visit of sympathy to Mrs. Booth that she fell down the steps from the hillside to the yard. So any mention of the Booths to her recalls her own accident, for which she blames herself. You were only a year old at the time, so you don't remember."

"But the steps aren't dangerous? You mean the flight beside our house? I run up and down them a dozen times a week."

"No, they're not dangerous," said Mr. Beaumont sadly.

"But mother fell," argued Rosa.

"You are a grown woman now, Rosa," said her father, putting on a stern air to cover his embarrassment, "so I can speak freely to you. Your mother was pregnant at the time. She slipped only from one step to the next, but suffered a miscarriage and some spinal displacement."

"Poor Mother," said Rosa softly.

Her father dashed down the newspaper he was reading and without a word went upstairs. She heard his tread on the floor above in her mother's room.

"He is genuinely attached to her," marvelled Rosa, and fell to thinking of the chances and changes of married life . . .

A few days later Rosa passed the dyehouse again. Joe Booth was again standing at the door. Rosa could not but remind herself that through the windows of the dyehouse she would be visible crossing the bridge. She smiled, well pleased. Let him admire her, she thought, tossing her head; he would feel her scorn the keener.

"Well, Joe," she said.

"Miss Rosa," replied Joe, touching his cap politely.

"It's not true that you're betrothed to Lizzie Lister, is it, Joe?" she demanded, her voice implying her utter incredulity at such a union.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Aye, we're tokened," mumbled Joe, colouring and looking down. "We's looking to get wed o' Christmas."

"I wish you every happiness, I'm sure," said Rosa. "I was surprised when I heard, because she's so much older than you are."

"Nay!" said Joe, startled into candour. "You're wrong, miss. Me and Lizzie's of an age. We were babbies together."

"You do surprise me," said Rosa.

Her voice, meant to be freezing, trembled with fury, her cheeks blazed. She struck away up the hill at a running pace, stumbling as she went. Loathsome, hateful, impertinent fellow! How dared he speak to her in that way! Telling her straight out she was wrong! Speaking to her of babies! How insulting! In rough Yorkshire, too! She was so indignant, so outraged, that she found she was sobbing. She struck off the main road down a quiet lane, sank down in an angle of the wall and burst into tears.

When her first fierce paroxysm was over she stood up, dried her eyes, settled her dress and hair, and decided that she would never pass the dyehouse again while Joe Booth was there. She looked about her; she had wandered some distance from the road; to reach home without passing the dyehouse she would need to walk down the valley for some miles and cross the river at Yarrowbridge. From there the Beaumont mansion, Mill House, was some four miles upstream. Her return home would be belated; her mother would be troubled, her father cross. Setting her fine lips in an angry line, she strode off towards Yarrowbridge...

It was long after dark when she reached home; her father was standing on his doorstep with a lantern in his hand, and greeted her irascibly. "Where on earth have you been, Rosa? Your mother has been worried to death about you. I was about to set out on a search. Come in at once."

"I was obliged to go round by Yarrowbridge," said Rosa, stripping off her gloves. "I could not return by the packhorse bridge."

"Why not, for heaven's sake?"

"I could not pass the dyehouse again," cried Rosa loudly. "Joe Booth insulted me as I went by."

"What? What?" shouted her father. "It's impossible, Rosa! He's a good lad, the best workman I've got."

Rosa burst into tears and rushed upstairs, sinking down beside her mother's bed.

"Is anything wrong, dear?" said her mother. "You mustn't take your father's scoldings too seriously. He was anxious about you, that is all."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Looking at that pale, quiet, austere face, calm, ennobled by long suffering patiently borne, Rosa was ashamed to admit, even to herself, the hollowness of her accusation.

"He didn't touch you, Rosa? He didn't touch you?" cried her father anxiously, rushing into the room.

Rosa shook her head.

"No. He was just—insufferable," she said.

"I shall have to sack him. Pity, because he's the best workman in the valley," said her father. "But of course he'll have to go."

"You didn't encourage him in any way, Rosa?" said her mother.

"Now, Hester, you know our daughter is incapable of such conduct," said Mr. Beaumont with an angry flush.

"Not intentionally. But perhaps without thought?" pressed Mrs. Beaumont.

"No, no, no!" cried Rosa, beating her fists on the white counterpane. "I can't bear to talk about it!" she wailed, and bowing her head she buried her beautiful face in her hands.

"I'll sack him first thing tomorrow morning," said Mr. Beaumont with a sigh.

The dismay on Joe Booth's face when he heard this decision was very painful.

"But what have I done wrong?" he faltered. "I thought you were right pleased with dyehouse, Mester Beaumont."

"I am, Joe."

"What's wrong, then?"

Greatly embarrassed, Mr. Beaumont managed to get out that Joe Booth had been exceedingly rude to his daughter.

"Never! I never did no such thing," said Joe, colouring. "Why, only yester afternoon Miss Rosa congratulated me on getting wed. She spoke to me herself, she did, and smiled."

"Well—you must have said something, you must have said *something*," said Mr. Beaumont. "You'll have to leave, Joe. I'm as sorry as you are, but you'll have to leave."

"I shall have to put off getting wed again, then, I suppose," said Joe, the colour fading slowly from his face.

"Nay, you'll soon get another job," said Mr. Beaumont, falsely cheerful.

"I can't make head nor tail of it," said Joe.

His perplexity appeared so genuine that Mr. Beaumont was shaken. But he could not now withdraw without discrediting his daughter.

"You'll leave at the end of the week, then," he said slowly.

"Nay, I'll leave now."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Take your week's wages, anyway," said Mr. Beaumont kindly, pushing a pile of silver across the office table towards him.

Joe put out his hand and with a disdainful sideways movement swept the coins to the floor.

"I'll bid you and yours good day, Mester Beaumont," he said as he walked out . . .

Doubtless none of the parties concerned deliberately intended to make the cause of their disagreement public; but the maids of the Beaumont household had overheard much of Rosa's complaint and invented more, and when Joe, seeking work, was asked with astonishment why he had left Beaumont's, he replied in a burst of fury that it was some tuppenny-he'penny complaint of Mr. Beaumont's daughter. The story spread like wildfire up and down the valley, embellished, exaggerated, told sometimes in suggestive tones.

It had already reached the Yarrow inn that evening when Joe, sick at heart after a long day's refusals, and dreading the return home without work or wages, dropped in for a pint.

"Now, Charlie," he said wearily, nodding to Lizzie's brother, who was standing by the bar.

To his surprise the face the young man turned to him was coldly angry.

"What's all this, then?" he said.

"What's all what?" snapped Joe.

"All this about thee and yon daughter o' Beaumont's," said the sandy-haired young man. "Us thought tha were tokened to our Lizzie."

"I am."

"What have you been up to with that proud piece Rosa, then? Eh?"

"Nowt!" shouted Joe, losing his temper. "If anyone says different, it's a vile lie!"

"Are you calling me a liar?" shouted Charlie, thrusting his face into his erstwhile friend's. "I'll call thee summat worse, I will!"

He threw out a vile epithet. Joe struck him in the face. He fell, but pulled Joe down with him, and in a moment they were fighting all over the sanded floor, while the other drinkers backed away to the side out of reach, shouting and laughing to egg them on. Joe, who was not aggressive by nature, was getting decidedly the worst of it when the inn door was thrown open and Lizzie came hurrying in. She seized the shoulders of the combatants and tried to pull them apart.

"Stop it! Stop it, will you! Don't be so daft! Give up now, or I'll clout you both! I mean it! And you standing round,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can't you give me a hand? Do you want murder done?"

Somewhat ashamed, the landlord and the rest fell to and pulled the men away from each other.

"I were only standing against Joe's hankering after yon Rosa," said Charlie sulkily.

"That's my business and I'll thank thee to keep out of it, Charlie Lister," retorted Lizzie.

"I've had nowt to do with yon daughter of Beaumont's," cried Joe, mopping his bleeding face. "Believe me, Lizzie."

"Of course I believe thee," replied Lizzie robustly. She laughed, and added, "Tha's too soft and gaumless, Joe, to try ony fancy work."

At this the bystanders laughed, and even Charlie managed a sickly grin.

But the affair, to which this fracas gave even wider circulation, naturally did not enhance Joe's reputation—or Rosa's.

The workers' wives, with the customary fierce morality of married women, felt indignation towards both, while their husbands showed resentment towards Joe—wasn't Lister's Lizzie good enough for him, that he must needs run after a mester's daughter? The millowners' wives thought there was no smoke without fire, and the haughty affected beauty Rosa Beaumont had only herself to thank for the scandal; while the manufacturers, their husbands, thought Joe Booth was getting above himself since he'd been made foreman—a stuck-up, pushing, plausible young scamp. They eyed him sardonically when he approached them, looked aside, and said in a dry tone that they would let him know if any vacancy turned up.

However, Joe was too good a workman to let slip if you needed one, whatever his morals, and after some weeks of hardship he was taken on at a mill higher up the Yarrow stream; but the mill was smaller, the pay and prospects poorer than at Beaumont's.

At Christmas the wedding of Joe and Lizzie took place as planned. But it was rather an uncomfortable affair. The two families had lived side by side, friendly neighbours, in the two central cottages of Beaumont's Row, for upwards of twenty years; now they felt sore towards each other. The Listers were not really suspicious of Joe. Even Charlie had come round to a belief in his friend, but thought him a fool to have involved himself in such a silly affair.

"If he'd got summat out of it," he grumbled lewdly, "I'd ha thought better of him."

But they were all vexed with Joe. A highly respectable family, they strongly disliked being thrust into the pillory of public notice, and resented the slur on one of their womenfolk.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Lizzie's hearty scoldings kept them in line, and they did their best to behave with decent politeness at the wedding, but they looked cross and peevish.

On the other hand the Booths, who regarded Joe as a victim, suspected the Listers of suspecting him. Old Booth was still embittered by his dismissal from the reservoir service, for which he justly blamed the Beaumonts, and he railed against them in a manner unbearable to Joe, who hated to hear the name of Beaumont mentioned. Mrs. Booth too, from whom Joe had inherited his sweet and loving disposition, distressed him by showing a most unusual temper; she stamped about with flushed cheeks and tightened lips, ready to flare up at any adverse hint about her son.

Under these discomforts Joe seemed at first moody and depressed. As they walked back together from church, hand in hand, man and wife, Lizzie tried to hearten him.

"Tha mun face it out, love," she murmured in his ear. "Tha's done nowt wrong. Stand up to 'em! I'm wi' thee all t'way, tha knows."

She pressed his hand. At this clasp, so warm and loving, Joe seemed reassured. He brightened up and became his usual self, gay and laughing, the life and soul of the party.

Both families hoped that once the wedding was over the gossip would die down and ordinary life resume its course. Lizzie, moving from the Listers' cottage to the Booths'—a separate home could not be afforded—certainly received nothing but kindness from Joe's mother and the younger children, and Joe proved a most affectionate and considerate husband. But old John Booth would not let them forget the scandal. The Beaumont name still haunted his lips, for he was quite obsessed by the Ling reservoir; he talked of it endlessly, walked up the valley regularly every Sunday, wet or fine, to look at it and, when rain was heavy, exclaimed with relish, "Ling's filling! I hope Tom Beaumont likes her when she brims!"

A gloomy, sodden winter gave him plenty of opportunities for these remarks which, by reminding Joe and Lizzie of Rosa, continually replanted thorns in their hearts.

It was on the first Sunday in February that old John Booth returned from his usual walk drenched to the skin, but with a look of satisfaction and excitement.

"Well! She's filling fast. She's like to brim if this rain goes on," he commenced as he hung up his dripping coat behind the door. The Booths, sitting round the bare wooden table at tea, gazed up at him without much interest.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Now, Father," said Joe mildly.

"If tha doesn'a believe me, go and look for thisen," said the old man, wiping his moustache. There was a kind of arrogant triumph in his tone which vaguely disturbed his son.

"You've said it so often before, that's all."

"Mebbe I have. This time it's different."

"Why?"

"Embankment's sunk so top of waste-pan is above top of embankment," said old Booth triumphantly.

"What does that mean, Father?" said his wife.

"It means that watter'll flow over embankment before it can flow into waste-pan and drain off through tunnel below. I tell you, make no mistake, yon reservoir will brim if this rain goes on. Go see for yourselves if you don't believe me," repeated the old man, with an airy wave towards the door.

"Maybe I'd best go up," said Joe wearily. He crossed to the door, opened it and looked out.

The night was dark and cold, and heavy rain, intermixed with sleet and flakes of snow, poured violently down. A chorus of protest arose from the rest. "Don't thee go, Joe—don't stir out—thee'll catch thi death o' cold." Joe shut the door.

"If it's right bad, happen we ought to mention it to Mester Beaumont," he said.

"Not me," said his father.

"Keep away from Beaumonts, Joe," said his wife.

"Maybe your brother would go, Lizzie," suggested Joe.

"That he never will. He wouldn't demean himself, he's had enough of Beaumonts."

"It's drawer's job to give warning, surely," said Mrs. Booth.

"There's nowt to be done now, ony road," said the old man. "A wall that size can't be built up in half an hour. She'll brim, you mark my words."

"There's other reservoir commissioners besides Mester Beaumont," reflected Joe.

"Nearest is three miles away. Sit thee down, Joe. Drawer will find it out in t'morning, when he goes to let watter flow down for t'mill. News'll be all over valley by noon."

In this forecast at least the old man was correct, and the news of the Ling danger spread rapidly up and down the valley. The next couple of days, though not to be called dry, for mist and drizzle prevailed, were not as wet as Sunday, and quite a few Yarrow men walked or rode up to the reservoir, and stood gazing at it with mixed alarm and fascination. They could not help feeling a certain enjoyable interest in the reservoir, which was certainly very full; waves, driven by one of the westerly breezes

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so frequent in the Pennines, slapped sharply against the embankment only a few feet from the top. Here and there, indeed, the surface of the water was less than a yard from the top; the embankment had certainly sunk in an uneven and untidy fashion. Criticism of the reservoir commissioners was severe. They should never have let it get into this state—it's disgraceful—well, they've no money—Lords wouldn't pass the Bill—I don't care; they should have repaired it, choose how. Mr. Beaumont, riding up on Tuesday morning, gave orders that the valves regulating the flow of water down the river were to be opened wide. With one culvert, this was immediately effected; the other valve for some reason stuck; a bush or tree had become lodged against the opening, perhaps; such a temporary closure had happened before. In this case, however, the closure proved not to be temporary, for the combined efforts of the drawer and several men borrowed from the upper mill where Joe now worked failed to open the valve.

In the early hours of Wednesday morning the weather changed. The drizzle gave way to pouring rain. A westerly breeze sprang up, became a wind, became a storm. All through the day the rain deluged the hills, the wind howled down the narrow valley. It was later estimated—perhaps erroneously—that during the afternoon the Ling reservoir was filling at the rate of eighteen inches of water an hour, while the strong wind drove all this vast volume of water against the embankment.

In the evening the rain suddenly stopped; the clouds cleared, the moon came out. The wind, however, still howled, and the air was biting as Joe made his way up the valley after work. A group of men, similarly drawn by curiosity, were standing on the hillside gazing down at the reservoir. Among them were the drawer, and Joe's father.

"Well, rain's stopped at last," said the drawer in a tone of relief.

"Aye, but watter hasn't stopped coming in," said John Booth. "Look at those becks up yonder."

He pointed to the hills which rose to the west. In the moonlight the streams on their sides showed white and swollen, leaping and foaming down the steep slopes into the Ling reservoir. "She'll brim," he said in a gloating tone.

"I reckon she will," said the drawer. "But the fields below will sop it all up, surely."

"If they don't it'll be a poor do for the mills along the riverside," said John Booth.

After a time Joe, hungry and tired, began to think of home and tea. His father, however, declined to budge.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Don't stop too late, now, Father," urged Joe.

"I shall stay till she brims," replied his father.

Joe was by now so tired of this expression, which had become a byword in the valley, that without any further attempts at persuasion he left the hillside.

In the silver light of the full moon every wall and building, every field and lane in the valley lay clear to his sight as he hurried down, driven on by the strong cold wind at his back. Remembering what his father had said, he eyed the mills on the banks of the river apprehensively and thought it was lucky that the overflow would occur—if it occurred at all—during the night when the mills were closed. Now that the rain had ceased, the peak of the water intake would be past in a few hours; if nothing happened before dawn, the reservoir would be safe for this time. Luckily Beaumont's Row stood halfway up the hillside, where surely the overflow would not reach. Beaumont House, however, stood on the level of the mill yard, tucked into the side of the hill. Joe hesitated. Pride made him exceedingly reluctant to approach the Beaumonts, yet it seemed to him mean, ignoble, not to give them warning. At length his natural goodness triumphed; he entered the massive front portico and pulled the bell. The maid who opened the door started back in alarm as she recognised him, and this angered Joe.

"Please tell Mester Beaumont as the Ling is still filling and there's like to be an overflow," he said.

"Shall I say who brought the message?"

"No. It's no matter. Well, say it came from the drawer—that's true enough," said Joe.

"We've heard about Ling before," said the maid pertly, "from your family."

Joe shrugged his shoulders and turned away.

He went home, ate his tea, talked with his wife and mother about the Ling and went to bed.

It was ten o'clock that night when the water in the reservoir, driven hard by the strong wind, began to flow over the top of the embankment. By midnight torrents of water were cascading down the outer surface at many points, and soon this grass-grown surface, not being faced with stone, began to crumble. Tons of loose earth and rubble were swiftly carried away. Hardly had the alarmed watchers become accustomed to this spectacle than the whole outer surface of the bank disappeared, leaving exposed the inner layer of clay. At one point near the north side of the reservoir there now became visible a gap in the clay.

"That's where the spring came through," said old Booth, pointing. "I told 'em so. I told 'em. There was clay in the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

watter, could only have come from the puddle in the wall."

His hearers murmured agreement.

"I was right, I believe?" went on old Booth fiercely. "Weren't I right? Eh?"

"Right enough," murmured his hearers, uneasily shuffling their feet.

Water now began to pour through the gap. The clay around it bulged, cracked, split; the split became fissures and ran along the whole length of the embankment; the clay began to slide and in a moment, it seemed, had totally disintegrated.

"This is more than brimming, John," said one man sardonically.

"It is that," replied old Booth gravely.

"But if that inner wall doesn't hold, what then?"

"God knows."

"It's stone, think on," said the drawer in the high quavering tones of fear.

At that moment, with a noise like a rolling peal of thunder, the whole mass of earthwork gave way, and three hundred thousand tons of water were released to rush down with fearful velocity upon the narrow valley through the gap thus made. For a moment the watchers stood stupefied, awestruck by the magnitude of the calamity and the fearfully grand spectacle of the huge waves billowing white beneath the moon. Then with incoherent cries of panic they turned and ran for their homes.

"Wakken up, Joe!" said his wife, shaking him.

"What's wrong?" said Joe, starting up.

"Thi father's not home yet, and thi mother's right upset."

His mother stood in the door of the tiny loft, wrapped in a shawl, a lighted candle in her hand.

"It's so fearfully wild, Joe," she murmured. "The wind's howling like a mad dog." Indeed a thunderous roar filled the air. "Thi father'll catch his death o' cold."

"He won't come home till Ling has brimmed," said Joe irritably. "It's no use to expect him."

His mother gazed at him piteously.

"Oh, very well," he said with a sigh. "I'll go."

He dressed rapidly and went out into the moonlight night. The wind, though keen and strong, was not as wild as he had expected from the sound, and he kept a good pace up the valley.

Suddenly, round a distant turn in the lane, he saw his father, running madly towards him. Whether from the moonlight or some other cause, John Booth's face looked blanched; his mouth was wide; he tossed his arms wildly in the air and shouted.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His words came in snatches down the wind. "Flood! Flood! It's coming, Joe, it's coming!"

Joe stood still. She's brimmed all right and it's worse than Father thought, he reflected.

"Quick, quick!" shouted his father, waving his arms frantically. "Go! Warn! Flood coming!"

Joe turned and ran as fast as he could down the valley.

Awakened by the wild banging on his front door, Mr. Beaumont got out of bed and threw up the window.

"What's to do?" he cried.

"Flood, Mester Beaumont!" shouted Joe. "Ling's brimmed heavily. You mun get your wife out quick."

"Come in and help me," cried Mr. Beaumont. He ran downstairs and opened the door. "By God, it's here already," he said in a hushed tone of awe, for the water was indeed swirling round Joe's ankles.

"Aye, and I guess there's more to come," said Joe uneasily, looking back over his shoulder.

"We can't get my wife out now, we can't get her out through this. She'll catch her death. The wind's strong too. It roars like thunder."

"Aye, if it is wind," said Joe. "We mun be quick. We can take her out straight to the steps through one of the bedroom side-windows."

"Nay, Joe!" Mr. Beaumont began to remonstrate, but broke off abruptly, for the water suddenly rushed round Joe's knees. "Come on!" he shouted, rushing for the stairs. "Rosa! Jane! Ellen!"

"Have you a ladder?" cried Joe.

"Aye! Round the back."

By the time Joe fought his way to the front door with the ladder the water was up to his waist and pouring into the hall. He tried to close the door behind him against the tide but could not, and was thankful to get the ladder to the stairway in the dark.

"Be quick, Joe, be quick!" cried Mr. Beaumont impatiently.

He had opened the bedroom window wide and was shouting, "Help! Help!" to some figures on the hill. They came clambering down the steps, faces white in the moonlight.

"Take this," said Joe, pushing the ladder across to them. "Hold it tight down against steps, now. We've got to get Mrs. Beaumont out."

They nodded and seemed to understand, though words were blown away in the thunderous roar which filled the air. Beaumont ran back to the bed, where Rosa was wrapping her mother tightly in a blanket. Hester lay still and quiet, her great eyes

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

beaming; as her husband picked her up, she clasped her arms about his neck.

"Can you manage, Mester Beaumont?"

"Aye, aye—she's not much weight."

Nevertheless when he reached the window he was crimson and gasping. Joe took the invalid in his arms. Released from his grasp, the ladder end shook on the sill.

"Hold the ladder tight," he commanded Rosa. "You, mester, get out on the ladder."

They obeyed. Joe lifted the woman through the window. Beaumont on the ladder slowly drew his wife towards him, and presently the men on the hillside steps reached out and were able to grasp his arms. After a long silent moment of infinite peril—the swirling water was now but a few feet below the ladder—man and wife were drawn to safety.

With a sudden scream the two maids rushed for the window and climbed out, banging their heads and bruising their elbows as they scrambled through. They were of course in their night-gear, and the men on the steps could not but grin as they hauled them across. "Now then, love, don't take on! Tha's safe enough, now!" they said, laughing, as they pushed the girls up the steps towards the lane.

"Now, Miss Rosa," said Joe, "Be quick now. Your mother'll be missing you."

Rosa stood gazing at him, her head thrown back, a look of scorn and anger on her beautiful face. Her glorious hair had come loose from its plait, and hung in rich abundance over her shoulders.

"Nay, you go first. Go to your wife, Joe Booth," she taunted him.

"Go! Go!" shouted Joe.

Rosa slowly shook her head. In a fury Joe grasped her by the wrist and tried to urge her to the window, but she resisted. For a moment they stood there together, their bodies close, a fierce hatred on each face, while the men on the hillside shouted warnings.

Then the great wave struck the house. The water which had previously come down was merely the overflow which preceded the burst; now the whole content of the reservoir flung itself against the Yarrow buildings in a towering mass. These solid structures of native millstone grit appeared to hesitate, then quivered in the wave—"wobbled a bit like, on top of the water," as one of the appalled spectators later recorded—and abruptly disintegrated. Mill House and Beaumont Mills disappeared; Beaumont Row followed. Houses, mills, sheds, bridges; chairs, tables, sofas, gates; cows, horses, sheep, carts;

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

haystacks, boulders, bales of cloth, machinery; all were swept away in the white roaring flood. The huge mill boiler, some thirty feet long, bobbed on the surface, as it swam down the valley, as if it were no weightier than a tea-kettle.

In twenty minutes the roaring waters ceased to flow; the reservoir had emptied itself. Where there had been grass, was now sand and boulders; where there had been thriving villages, tumbled heaps of stone and silence.

The awful calamity, the appalling loss of life, the fearful devastation in the Yarrow valley, aroused the sympathy, not only of the West Riding and of Yorkshire, but of the whole nation. Relief funds were set on foot and capably administered; a competent engineering expert was sent down from London to attend the inquest, which was adjourned for a fortnight to give him time for the preparation of a full report. Meanwhile the sad tasks of retrieving the bodies of those who had perished, burying the drowned animals, clothing and feeding those who had survived but lost all their possessions, and collecting any small pieces of property which might have been left behind when the flood passed by, were pursued with great energy, chiefly by the constabulary of the down-valley town of Annotsfield, for the Yarrow valley inhabitants were mostly too stunned to take an active part.

Annotsfield journalists wrote down the tales of the survivors—some strange, some pitiable, most tragic. In Beaumont's Row only eight inhabitants survived from the ten houses. Of these Joe's father and Lizzie's brother were the only two remaining of their families. Lizzie's brother, asleep in bed, then suddenly lost in a waste of tossing waters, was struck by a roof-beam, and being a strong determined youth managed at last to seat himself astride it. The end of the beam presently caught in a pile of stones and the waves threw him to dry land. The bodies of the drowned were so widely scattered that they were deposited in the nearest public house; any property which was found was taken to the Yarrow Bridge town hall. Thus sad groups collected at every inn door seeking for lost relations, and Mr. Beaumont rode frantically up and down the valley looking for his daughter.

"Have you ony here?" asked Charlie Lister at an inn far down the valley—almost, indeed, in Annotsfield.

"Aye, we've two. Young uns. Husband and wife," said the landlord.

"That might be my sister and her husband," said Charlie, stepping in.

"They're all entwined, like," said the landlord sympathetically. "Very sad to see 'em."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He led the young man into the inn parlour, and threw back the coverlet from the table.

The two bodies which lay there were, as the landlord said, entwined. Joe, who had been fully dressed at the moment of disaster, still retained a few tattered rags about him, but the woman locked in his arms was naked. Even in death her body had great beauty; her face was peaceful, her eyes closed. Joe's throat was entangled in her long hair. Charlie looked down at them in silence.

"Well? Is it them, eh?"

"That's my brother-in-law, Joe Booth, all right," said Charlie.

"Sad. He's been a handsome lad, you can see," said the landlord.

"But that isn't his wife."

"What?" exclaimed the landlord, startled.

"That's not my sister," said Charlie.

"Who is it then?"

"It's Miss Rosa Beaumont of Mill House."

"What, Tom Beaumont's daughter?"

"Aye. You'd best send a message to the town hall for him," said Charlie hardly. "He's offering a reward for the recovery of her body, I hear."

"Your Joe was trying to save her, no doubt," said the landlord in an apologetic tone.

"Maybe."

"We'd best separate them," said the landlord, looking aside. Charlie was silent. "What dost think, eh?"

Charlie did not speak. "Come, lad," said the landlord, laying his hand on Charlie's sleeve, "it's no use carrying it beyond the grave."

"Well," began Charlie, and paused. "Well, come on then," he said roughly, seizing one of the livid marble arms. "We'd best get started."

So perhaps after all Rosa was not an example of Trevisa's malice of the soul. Perhaps what she had felt for Joe was simply love. Yes; perhaps, when she first saw him, that Sunday afternoon on the embankment, it was the strange sweet thrill of sexual love which coursed swiftly through her veins. Love—with all its natural accompaniments: jealousy; fury when scorned; manœuvres, of the delicate feminine kind, to attract the loved one's attention. Perhaps, too, she had felt entitled to love Joe because deep in her heart she knew he loved her. Did he? Did she? Perhaps. Who knows? Not Trevisa, certainly.

© Phyllis Bentley 1963

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IT TAKES A THIEF

"That's a lot of money," he said softly, frantically studying the detective's eyes

BY ARTHUR MILLER

SOME people are laughing in our neighbourhood these nights, but most of us are just waiting, like the Sheltons. It is simply unbelievable, it came out so right.

Here is this man, Mr. Shelton, a middle-aged man with what they call a nice family and a nice home. Ordinary kind of businessman, tired every night, sits around on Sundays, pinochle and so on. The point is, he's been doing all right the past few years. Automobiles. His used cars were shipped to California, Florida—wherever the war plants were springing up. Did fine. Then the war ended. The new cars started coming through and then the strikes made them scarce. But people wanted them very badly. Very, very badly. He did fine. Very, very fine.

One night not long ago he and his wife decided to take in a night club, and she put on her two diamond rings, the bracelet, and some of her other frozen cash, and they locked up the house—the children are all married and don't live at home any more—and they were off for a trip to the city.

Nobody knows what they did in the city, but they stayed out till three in the morning. Late enough for Shelton to get a headful. The drive home was slow and careful because the car was one of his brand-new ones and he couldn't see too well in his condition. Nevertheless, when he put the key in the front-door lock he was able to notice that the door swung open at a touch, whereas it usually took some juggling of the latch. They went in and turned on the living-room lights, and then they saw it.

The drawer of the desk was lying on the floor, and the rug was littered with cheque stubs and stationery. The Sheltons rushed into the dining-room and saw at once that the sterling-silver service was gone from the massive serving-table. Shelton clutched at his heart as though he were going to suffocate, and Mrs. Shelton thrust her fingers into her hair and screamed. At this stage, of course, there was only the sensation that an alien presence had passed through their home. Perhaps they

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

even imagined that the thief was still there. In wild fright they ran to the stairs and up to their bedroom, and Shelton tripped and fell over a bureau drawer that the thief had left on the threshold. Mrs. Shelton helped him up and made him lie down on the colonial bed and she massaged his heart while they both looked anxiously towards the dressing-room door, which stood open.

When he had caught his breath, he pushed her aside and went into the dressing-room and turned on the light. She crowded in beside him as soon as she saw the terrible expression on his face. The safe. The little steel safe that had always stood in the corner, covered with dressboxes and old clothes, the safe was looking up at them from the corner with its door open. Shelton simply stood there, panting. It was Mrs. Shelton who got to her knees and felt inside.

Nothing. Nothing was left. The safe was empty. Mrs. Shelton, on her knees in the dressing-room, screamed again. Perhaps they felt once more the presence, the terrifying presence of the thief, for they rushed one behind the other down the stairs, and Shelton picked up the telephone.

The instrument shook in his hand as he bent over close to the dial and spun it round. Mrs. Shelton moved up and down beside him, clasping and unclasping her hands and weeping. "Oh, my God!"

"Police!" Shelton roared into the telephone as soon as he heard the operator's calm voice. "My house has been robbed. We just got home and—"

His voice caught Mrs. Shelton just as she was about to dig her fingers into her hair again. For an instant she stood perfectly still, then she turned suddenly and swung her arm out and clapped her hand over Shelton's mouth. Infuriated, he attempted to knock her hand away. Then his eyes met hers. They stood that way, looking into each other's eyes; and then Shelton's hand began to shake violently and he dropped the telephone with a loud bang on to the marble tabletop and collapsed into a high-backed, Italian-type chair. Mrs. Shelton replaced the telephone on its cradle as the operator's anxious voice flowed out of it.

They were both too frightened to speak for a few minutes. The same thing was rushing through their heads and there was no need to say what it was. Only a solution was needed, and neither of them could find it. At last Mrs. Shelton said, "You didn't give the operator the name or address. Maybe—"

"We'll see," he said, and went into the living-room and stretched out on the couch.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mrs. Shelton went to the front windows and drew the blinds. Then she came back to the couch and proceeded to walk up and down beside it, her breasts rising and falling with the heavy rhythm of her breathing.

Nothing happened for nearly an hour. They even made a pass at undressing, just as though he had not shouted frantically into the telephone that his house had been robbed. But they were hardly out of their clothes when the doorbell rang. In dressing-gown and slippers Shelton went down the stairs with his wife behind him. In the presence of strangers he always knew how to look calm, so much so that when he opened the door and let the two policemen in, he appeared almost sleepy.

The question of his having hung up without giving his name was cleared away first: he had been too excited to give that detail to the operator. The officers then went about inspecting the premises.

That completed, Shelton and his wife sat in the living-room with them and gave a detailed description of the seven pieces of jewellery that had been taken from the safe, and the silver service, and the old Persian lamb coat, and the other items, all of which were noted in a black-covered pad that one policeman wrote in.

When Shelton had closed the door behind the two officers, he stood thinking for a while, and his wife waited for his word. Finally he said, "We'll report the jewellery to the insurance company tomorrow."

"What about the money?"

"How can I mention the money?"

She knew there was no answer to that one, but it was hard, nevertheless, to give up $91,000 without a complaint.

In bed they lay without moving. Thinking. "What'll we do," she asked, "if they find the crook and he's still got the money?"

A long time later Shelton said, "They never catch thieves."

Eight days passed, in fact, before Shelton's opinion was proved wrong. The telephone rang at dinnertime. He covered the mouthpiece with his palm and turned to his wife. "They want me to come down and identify the stuff." There was a quavering note in his voice.

"What about the money?" she whispered.

"They didn't mention the money," he said, questioning her with his eyes.

"Maybe tell them you're too sick to go now."

"I'll have to go some time."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Try to find out first if they found the money."

"I can't *ask* them, can I?" he said angrily, and turned again to the telephone and said he would be right over.

He drove slowly. The new, purring engine, the $1,900 car for which he could easily get $4,000 cash carried him effortlessly towards the police station. He drove slumped in the seat. As though to rehearse, he kept repeating the same sentence in his mind: I am simply a dealer, I am simply a dealer; I kept that much cash on hand to buy cars with. It sounded all right, businesslike. But was it possible they were that dumb? Maybe. They were just plain cops. Plain cops might not realise that $91,000 was too much to have in a safe for that purpose. And still, it was possible they would not stumble on the truth at all, not know that cash in a home safe was probably not entered in any ledger or income-tax form. Cops did not know much about big money, he felt. And yet—$91,000. Oh! $91,000! His insides grew cool at the thought of it. Not 20,000, or 40,000, not even 75,000, but $91,000. His retirement, his whole future ease, his very sureness of gait lay entirely in that money. It had become a tingling sensation for him, a smell, a feeling, a taste—$91,000 in cash in his safe at home. He had even stopped bothering to read the papers in the past year. Nothing that happened in the world could touch him while he had $91,000 in his dressing-room.

There were three policemen sitting in the room when he entered. He identified himself, and they asked him to sit down. One of them went out. The remaining two were in shirtsleeves and seemed to be merely waiting around. In a little while a greyhaired man entered, followed by a detective who carried a cheap canvas zipper bag which he set on a desk near the door. The detective introduced himself to Shelton, and asked him to repeat his description of the jewellery. Shelton did so in some detail, answering more specific questions as they occurred to the detective.

The greyhaired man had slumped into a chair. Now he sat staring at the floor. Shelton slowly realised, as he described the jewellery, that this was the thief; for the man seemed resigned, very tired, and completely at home in the situation.

The detective went at last to the desk and opened the zipper bag and laid out the jewellery for Shelton to inspect. Shelton glanced at it and said it was his, picking up a wedding ring which had his name and his wife's engraved on the inside.

"We'll have the coat for you by tomorrow and maybe the silver, too," the detective said, idly arranging the jewellery in a pattern on the desk as he spoke. Shelton felt that the detective

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was getting at something from the way he played with the jewellery. The detective completed the pattern on the desk and then turned his broad, dark face towards Shelton and said, "Is there anything else you lost?"

Shelton's hand, of its own accord, moved towards his heart as he said, "That's all I can remember."

The detective turned his whole body now and sat easily on the edge of the desk. "You didn't lose any money?"

The greyhaired thief raised his head, a mystified look clouding his face.

"Money?" asked Shelton. And yet he could not help adding, "What money?" Just curiously.

"We found this on him," the detective said, reaching into the bag and taking out five rolled-up wads of money wrapped in red rubber bands. Shelton's heart hurt him when he saw the rubber bands, because they, more than any of the other items, were peculiarly his. They were the rubber bands he always used in his office.

"There's $91,000 here," the detective said.

The thief was looking up at Shelton from his chair, an expression of wounded bewilderment drawing his brows together. The detective merely sat on the desk, an observer; the moment suddenly belonged only to Shelton and the thief.

Shelton stared at the money without any expression on his face. It was too late to think fast; he had no idea what sort of mind this stolid detective had and he dared not hesitate long enough to sound the man out. A detective, Shelton knew, is higher than a cop; is more like a businessman, knows more. This one looks smart, and yet maybe . . .

Shelton broke into a smile and touched one of the wads of bills that lay on the desk. (Oh, the $91,000; oh, the touch of it!) Sweat was running down his back; his heart pained like a wound. He smiled and stalled for time. "That's a lot of money," he said softly, frantically studying the detective's eyes for a sign.

But the detective was impassive, and said, "Is it yours?"

"Mine?" Shelton said, with a weak laugh. Longingly he looked at the solid wads. "I wish it were, but it isn't. I don't keep ninety-one thou—"

The thief, a tall man, stood up quickly and pointed to the money. "What the hell is *this*?" he shouted, amazed.

The detective moved towards him, and he sat down again. "It's his. I took it out of the safe with the other stuff."

"Take it easy," the detective said.

"Where did I get it, then?" the thief demanded in a more

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

frightened tone. "What're you trying to do, pin another job on me? I only pulled one, that's all! You asked me and I told you." And pointing directly up at Shelton's face, he said, "He's pullin' something!"

The detective, as he turned to Shelton, was an agonisingly expressionless man who seemed to have neither pulse nor point of view. He simply stood there, the law with two little black eyes. "You're sure," he said, "that this is not your money?"

"I ought to know," Shelton said, laughing calmly.

The detective seemed to catch the absurdity of it, and very nearly smiled. Then he turned to the thief and, with a nod of his head, motioned him outside. The two policemen walked out behind him.

They were alone. The detective, without a word, returned to the desk and put the jewellery back into the zipper bag. Without turning his head, he said that they would return the stuff to Shelton in the morning. And then he picked up one of the heavy wads, but instead of dropping it into the bag he weighed it thoughtfully in his palm and turned his head to Shelton. "Lot of dough," he said.

"I'll say," Shelton agreed.

The detective continued placing the wads in the bag. Shelton stood a little behind him and to one side, watching as best he could for the slightest change in the man's expression. But there was none; the detective might have been asleep but for his open eyes. Shelton wanted to leave—immediately. It was impossible to know what was happening in the detective's head.

And yet Shelton dared not indicate his desperation. He smiled again, and shifted his weight easily to one foot and started to button his coat, and said—as if the question were quite academic—"What do you fellas do with money like that?"

The detective zipped the bag shut. "Money like what?" he asked evenly.

A twinge of pain shot through Shelton's chest at the suspicious reserve in the detective's question. "I mean, money that's not claimed," he amended.

The detective walked past him towards the door. "We wait," he said, and opened the door.

"I mean, supposing it's never claimed?" Shelton asked, following him, still smiling as though with idle curiosity.

"Hot money is never claimed," the detective said. "We'll just wait. Then we'll start looking around."

"I see."

Shelton walked with the detectives to the door of the police

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

station, and he even talked amiably, and then they said a pleasant good night.

Staring at the road surface rolling under the wheels of his car, he could summon neither feeling nor thought. It was only when he opened the door of his house, the house that had once contained the fortune of his life, that his numbness flowed away, and he felt weak and ill.

"There must be a way to get it back," she began.

"How?"

"You mean to tell me—?"

"I mean to tell you!" he shouted, and got to his feet. "What'll I do, break into the police station?"

"But they've got laws against robbery!"

In reply, Shelton pulled his collar open and climbed the stairs and went to bed . . .

These days, Shelton drives to business very slowly. The few friends he has in the block have grown accustomed to the grey and haunted stare in his eyes. The children seem to quiet down as he guides his car through their street games.

Sometimes he goes by the police station, and passing it he slows down and peers through the car window at it, but always goes on.

And when a police car rolls into the block on its ordinary tour, people can be seen stopping to watch until it passes his house. Nobody has said anything, of course, but we are waiting with Shelton for that awful moment when the police car pulls up at his door. And it must, of course.

Thirty days, maybe two months from now, it will turn the corner and slow down, and gradually, ominously, come to a stop.

The house is very quiet these nights—almost silent. The blinds are drawn, and it is seldom that you see anyone going in or out. The Sheltons are waiting.

★ **Long, lean, craggy, Miller's the pipe-smoking intellectual giant of the American theatre who worked his way through Michigan University largely by looking after mice in the science laboratories. In between, he studied, and wrote plays.**

The first Arthur Miller written for the professional theatre ran for precisely five nights; the second won instant acclaim, and Death of a Salesman, the Pulitzer Prize.

After his brilliant film script The Misfits he has no desire to write more. "They devour your life and years—O.K. for actors, not for writers." So he writes articles, plays, stories plucked from his own experience of people—little people, big people, frightened people like the Sheltons.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

artistic temperament

There is no rule that may not be broken in the interest of a greater beauty.

LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN

A Pre-Raphaelite
Had to have things right.
The patient redhead, Elizabeth Siddal,
Lay in the bathtub up to her middle
(But richly gowned)
To show what she would look like drowned.
At last she sneezed: Oh Mr. Millais,
Do I 'ave to welter 'ere all day?
It's enough to congeal ya:
Posing for Ophelia.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY, *The Pre-Raphaelite*

That's Life

As they still looked at her, curious and half embarrassed, she pulled a paper parcel containing food out of one of the coat-pockets, and exclaimed:

"I'll just take a bite, if you don't object; I'm a model, you know, and it's just rung twelve—the rest. I'm posing for Durien the sculptor, on the next floor. I pose to him for the altogether."

"The altogether?" asked Little Billee.

"Yes—*l'ensemble*, you know—head, hands, and feet—everything—especially feet. That's my foot," she said, kicking off her big slipper and stretching out the limb. "It's the handsomest foot in all Paris. There's only one, in all Paris to match it, and here it is," and she laughed heartily (like a merry peal of bells), and stuck out the other . . .

Little Billee, who had the quick, prehensile, aesthetic eye, and knew by the grace of Heaven what the shapes and sizes and colours of almost every bit of man, woman, or child should be

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(and so seldom are), was quite bewildered to find that a real, bare, live human foot could be such a charming object to look at, and felt that such a base or pedestal lent quite an antique and Olympian dignity to a figure that seemed just then rather grotesque in its mixed attire of military overcoat and female petticoat, and nothing else!

GEORGE DU MAURIER, *Trilby*

Model Wife

So, in the Chapel called Savoy,
He purged his grave offences
By marrying Miss Elsie Gloy
Whose services he could employ
To lessen his expenses.
No other model did he need;
She proved a model wife indeed!

She loved to pose (with little on)
As Jezebel or Circe,
As Leda (with attendant swan),
Antaea (with Bellerophon)
Or Beldam (without Mercy),
While, as Europa (with a Bull),
Her cup of joy was nearly full.

HARRY GRAHAM, *Elsie Gloy*

Fanny had started a painting of me before we left New York and when we went on tour the unfinished picture went along. It was Fanny's version of a Degas painting: the one where the model is sitting with one leg up, drying herself with a towel. It wasn't an easy pose to hold, and the kitchenette table I sat on left a lot to be desired. It was a gate-leg, and every time I took a deep breath it pinched me.

"Sit still!" Fanny would say. "How can I paint when you're squirming around like a whirling dervish?"

"If you had to sit here with your bottom getting pinched you'd squirm too!" I replied.

"Look, kid," Fanny said, wiping the paintbrush on her chest, "I'm the artist, you're the model, so shut up and sit still."

Fanny always cleaned her brushes on her chest. Her pyjama tops had become so caked with paint she couldn't wear them, so now she painted just in the bottoms. After a long session Fanny's chest was usually covered with streaks of burnt sienna, yellow ochre, or cadmium blue.

GYPSY ROSE LEE, *Gypsy*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Come, let us daub, my crazys,
Surrealise the thrill
Of soapsuds on the daisies
And skylarks in the swill.

Ours not to reason whether
Surprise surpasseth wonder
When man hath joined together
What God hath rent asunder.

LEONARD FEENEY, S. J., *The Surrealist*

Art Nouveau

He decided that the sitting-room was to be redecorated. Furthermore, he was going to do it himself. He went to "the Stones," the Caledonian Market, and came back with rolls of wallpaper covered all over with immense peacocks. The next time I arrived at the farm, the sitting-room was ablaze with these gaudy peacocks, many of them upside down, and he had not bothered to remove the pictures on the walls, but simply papered round them. JOHN LUKENS, *The Sanger Story*

artist's model. 1. *A girl who works only when the boss is looking.* 2. *One whose business is at a standstill most of the time.* 3. *A girl who is not as bad as she's painted.* 4. *A girl who's not always a model of good behaviour.* 5. *A girl who doesn't always feel in the nude for work.* 6. *A girl who barely makes a living.*

Esar's Comic Dictionary

Designing Male

"And you've really married her."

"Yes, really," he said . . .

"Love at first sight."

"That's it," he said. "As soon as I saw her I said, You attract me a lot. Take off, will you? So she stripped and—well, you've seen her. She's unique. Look here, Lolie, I said, you're practically made for me, but how much do you charge? Three bob an hour to a sculptor because of the dust, she said. I can't afford to pay anything, I said, but I'll marry you, and you can still sit in the mornings to anyone you like. I can carve all night."

"And she accepted you."

"Yes, she said she wanted to be settled. And she often makes four or five pounds in a good week. We do very well. It's been a great success." JOYCE CARY, *The Horse's Mouth*

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

RENDEZVOUS U-295

Maybe a wanton fate had arranged it

BY C. S. FORESTER

IN TELLING this story, the first picture I have in my mind's eye is one which I have never seen in actuality. It is the edge of the great icecap that covers the interior of Greenland; in the north this vast shield of ice, hundreds of feet thick, extends to the very edge of the land and even beyond, far out to sea. The snow which falls there both in winter and summer turns to ice under the steady pressure of its own vast weight, and this ice, continually renewed in the centre, spreads out so that its edges in the sea continually break off, forming the icebergs which drift south to their ultimate fate in the warmer waters of the North Atlantic. In summer it is eternally day, if you can call it that, where skies are leaden grey and excruciating winds sweep over the icy surface.

Captured German records which, in my capacity as naval historian, I was allowed to consult, show that it was here, immediately after the German conquest of Norway in the spring of 1940, that two Germans named Marwitz and Diepholz brought their ski-equipped plane to a landing. This is the place where much of the weather of the world originates, and the German High Command, with its plans for the conquest of France and the invasion of England, needed for its weather forecasts the data that Greenland could supply. German scientists had devised ingenious automatic apparatus, weatherproof and coldproof. Once installed, each unit at regular intervals would emit a radio signal giving the barometric pressure—a feeble enough signal, but strong enough for a German submarine lurking off the coast to be able to pick it up and relay it to Germany.

It was the duty of Marwitz and Diepholz to install one of these self-recording, automatic broadcasting barometers and to see that it was functioning properly before they left. They did the job thoroughly enough; at Ballestrand, Norway, the Germans had a Naval Air Arm base, and the newspapers published there

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for several months during 1940 carried notes of the instrument's broadcasts being received. But Marwitz was the only one of the two who returned to Norway.

I have read with my own eyes Marwitz' explanation of Diepholz' disappearance. Marwitz reported that Diepholz fell down a crevasse—an easy enough thing to do on the seaward edge of the Greenland icecap. For here the ice is widely seamed; the slowly advancing ice sheet curls over lofty cliffs and, in its curling over, cracks wide open in crevasses a hundred feet deep which close again when the ice levels itself out on the surface of the sea.

Judging by his notes, the Gestapo spy at Ballestrand had no doubt that Marwitz had pushed Diepholz into the crevasse, but nothing could be proved. Two men had gone and one had returned.

The Gestapo spy knew there had been causes of enmity between the two men—no unusual thing in Germany where standing in the Party was often a matter of life and death. But when I interviewed Marwitz in his padded cell in a prison hospital, at Clayton, Ohio, he said many things the spy never knew.

It was a sufficiently revolting story. There was a Norwegian girl—or rather there *had been* a Norwegian girl until the moment of her death—over whom Marwitz and Diepholz had quarrelled. A nasty story, and one which reflected no credit whatever on either Marwitz or Diepholz.

The men had not quarrelled during their two or three days on the Greenland ice, although heaven knows—and the Gestapo spy hinted—that it would be easy enough for two men to quarrel in that bleak, grey, frozen hell. But Marwitz, I know from his own lips, murdered Diepholz, caught him unawares on the edge of a crevasse and pushed him down.

The fall did not kill Diepholz. He lay there at the bottom of the crevasse, crying up to Marwitz for mercy until at last hunger and cold combined with his injuries to kill him. But just before the end he left off crying for mercy and feebly screamed threats of retribution, threats at which Marwitz could well afford to smile as he stood on the lip of the crevasse with the snow-laden wind blowing round him and waited for the end. Then Marwitz climbed back into the plane and took off on his flight back to Norway.

The records show that soon after his return to Ballestrand, Marwitz was transferred to new duties—he undoubtedly left Ballestrand under a cloud as a result of the scandal about Diepholz' disappearance. At this time the German U-boat attack was expanding gigantically and so were U-boat losses.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Good submarine officers, always hard to find, were growing scarcer, and Marwitz was put into the U-boat service, based on the French coast at La Rochelle, where he was given a boat of his own, U-295, and the rank of Kapitän-Leutnant.

The Ballestrand and La Rochelle records told me much about Marwitz, as did a petty officer who had served under him and whom I was fortunate enough to be able to trace to a prisoner-of-war camp in California. As I had seen for myself, Marwitz was a bulky silent man, with slightly protuberant grey eyes, and the petty officers made it plain that he was also a cold man, with a certain lust for cruelty.

He was, therefore, feared and hated in the U-295, but that hardly mattered to the German Naval Command as long as he maintained a fair record of sinkings. And he did go out repeatedly from the spring of 1941 to the spring of 1944; they had some narrow escapes, but they did not meet with disaster for three years—four years after Diepholz had met his death in the crevasse.

They were after the North Atlantic convoy in May, 1944. With the invasion of France in the immediate future every German submarine available was given the same task. But the convoy they attacked was heavily guarded by ships manned with experienced veterans. U-295 was detected below the surface and attacked repeatedly by depth charges. The petty officer's round blue eyes grew wide with terror as he told me about the awful ordeal of that hunt—the constant rain of depth charges, the explosions which flung them about inside the flimsy hull, the leaks which developed and the machinery which broke down. Marwitz had kept his head—the petty officer gave me a neat word picture of him standing in the control room giving his orders—and at the very last second, U-295 had escaped from her tormentors.

They were compelled to surface, because of the leaks; in fact the submarine was in a bad way, with holes in her hull, and her fuel tanks leaking so that she left a long trail of oil behind her. But her Diesels were unharmed and on the surface she could still make twenty knots, as Marwitz ordered when he came out on the bridge. The weather was as thick as North Atlantic weather usually is, and he was momentarily out of sight of the pursuing escort vessels which for the last thirty-six hours had hounded him remorselessly away from the convoy. Twenty knots and thick weather still gave them a chance for safety. With her engines at full throttle she went roaring over the grey sea.

My petty officer informant was up on the bridge with Marwitz. He told me, still wide-eyed, about that mad chase, the freezing

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

spray bursting over them from the bows of the submarine, the wreaths of fog now concealing, now revealing them to their pursuers. Marwitz, still cool, saw a thicker patch of fog on the horizon and headed for it.

Five seconds later it happened. That fog was the mist which almost always surrounds an iceberg. They saw the glassy vertical surface gleam coldly through the mist, and then they crashed against it, not head on but a diagonal glancing blow which ripped open the bottom of the fleeing U-boat.

It could not have been for very long that they hung against the wall of ice—not more than two or three seconds—but it was long enough. The petty officer's thick lips trembled and his hands gesticulated wildly as he told me about it. There beside them, clearly visible through the glassy ice, entombed a yard deep within the iceberg, stood the body of a man.

"What was he wearing?" I asked.

"A flying-suit," replied the petty officer.

"Of what country?"

To this question the petty officer hesitated to reply, and I was obliged to prod him with allusions to the powerful secret government department which I represented and which would stick at nothing when in quest of information.

"A German officer's flying-suit," he said at length.

"Did you recognise him?"

"No, I did not," said the petty officer.

"And what did the Kapitän-Leutnant say?"

A longer pause this time. Maybe if the petty officer had not heard about the methods of the Nazis for extracting information and imagined me to be versed in the same sort of procedure he would not have answered at all.

"What did the Kapitän-Leutnant say?" I repeated.

"He said, 'Diepholz! Diepholz!' But I don't know what that means."

I knew what it meant. In the four years since 1940 the ice on the edge of the Greenland icecap had progressed far enough to sea to break off, and an iceberg enclosing Diepholz' body had started on its southward voyage, to a rendezvous with U-295. Maybe it was chance, or maybe a wanton fate had arranged it.

© C. S. Forester 1963

HOMICIDE: *The slaying of one human being by another. There are four kinds of homicide: felonious, excusable, justifiable, and praiseworthy, but it makes no great difference to the person slain whether he fell by one kind or another—the classification is for the advantage of the lawyers.* AMBROSE BIERCE

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SECRET AIRSTRIP

She had flared into new hostility
the moment she saw the plane

BY EDWARD LINDALL

ED BARLOW'S broad and sunburnt features were heavy with a mixture of resentment and anger, a vast disquietude, as he stumped down from the house and turned the corner of his implement shed. His brown eyes, narrowed against the late morning sunlight after the shadow of the house, shafted a glare at Charlie Bigtoe and Tommy Tucker, chanting a liquid-sounding native song as they worked unhurriedly at putting a new rail into the stockyard fence.

"Hi, boss," Charlie Bigtoe called, grinning like piano keys across his big black face.

"Good morning," Barlow grunted and didn't mean it, either as a comment or a wish. It was a dark, emotional thunderhead of a morning.

He turned abruptly into the big iron shed that sheltered the machines he had so painstakingly acquired over the years: a small secondhand bulldozer for dam building, a harvester for summer feeding-crops, a couple of old trucks, and a battered but efficient jeep, the motor that supplied electricity for the house and outbuildings and pumped water when the windmill failed. He took a greasegun from a rack nailed to the wall-timbers and advanced on the jeep.

It didn't really need greasing; it was smooth with care, but it was the dirtiest job around the place. And he needed it. He needed a job that he could hate because that way he could work off steam. He would have preferred, of course, to have taken Collie, his wise old stockhorse, and gone riding in the scrub. But the plane had landed out past the hills the previous afternoon. He didn't want to leave the homestead while it was down. He might see something. People might think he was involved.

He cursed now, thinking of the plane, and swung his big strong-framed body on to the front seat of the jeep, one long leg swinging, the other anchored to the ground. There was a quality of quiet dependability about Ed Barlow. At forty, he

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was not a spectacular man. He was the sort who worked hard and appreciated what he had; the sort who was slow to form attitudes and slow to alter them.

Blast the plane! he thought now. He had seen it first seven weeks ago, or rather read its tracks, and Mary had been arguing quietly yet doggedly all that time, eroding his patience with persistence, pushing her viewpoint with the awful inflexibility of someone who knows she is right and cannot appreciate any other rightness than her own. She argued like that, all woman, tall and rounded, dark-eyed and dark-haired, and with a will like a team of donkeys. She had flared into a new hostility the moment yesterday when she had seen the plane. And he knew she must have been watching for it, because in all the times it must have landed on the airstrip he had never spotted it, a speck against an immensity of sky. She had insisted, almost frantically, that he should tell the police.

Barlow wished again now, as he had wished so many times, that he had kept his mouth shut. But so few unusual things happened in the busily placid life of Brolga Downs, a thousand square miles of cattle country in the lonely northern territory of Australia, that it had been natural to come home and tell of his discovery.

He had been hunting strays with Charlie Bigtoe and Tommy Tucker in the thick scrub on the far side of the low hills fifteen miles north of the homestead, driving them into a rough V-fence preparatory to pushing them back, as a herd, into the main pasture lands. And they had ridden along the old abandoned airstrip, a secret wartime base for the American Liberator bombers that had operated against the Japanese in Timor and Indonesia, until the war rolled farther north.

Charlie Bigtoe, with his radar eyes, had seen them first . . . tyre tracks leading off the strip into one of the many old bays beneath the fringing trees. And the bay had been cleared of its new-grown curtain of bushes. A dozen drums of fuel stood along its edge, and there were the oil drip patches and the fat tyre tracks of a three-ton truck. Charlie Bigtoe and Tommy Tucker could read mechanised tracks as easily as they could identify the age and weight of honey ants, the dimensions of a kangaroo. The tracks were four weeks old. And there were men's tracks too, a few of them big and booted, the majority small and curiously muffled, without heels.

Barlow had filled it in from there. He had heard rumours on his infrequent trips to Darwin and Katherine, of organised refugee smuggling, the unthinking, casual rumours of bar rooms where men swop idle talk to fight off time. And then, at the

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

old airstrip, he knew he had stumbled on the feedline. These muffled tracks were from the sandals of Chinese refugees being smuggled in to work in the market gardens of the southern cities, in Chinese restaurants, in coastal ships. Poor homeless devils, Barlow thought, who should be entering Australia lawfully, given a home in their homeless world.

The plane, he deduced from the tyre tracks and the state of the strip, was some sort of four- or six-seater, doubtless one of those fast American lights. It would carry up to ten thin Chinese, and maybe more, on island-hops down through the back areas of Indonesia and Timor.

"You will radio Sergeant Lawson, of course," Mary had said when he told her, intensely serious across the white-clothed spotlessness of their dinnertable.

Barlow had raised his eyebrows, his big broad face bland, his brown eyes a little wider, and the crowsfeet wrinkles at the corners deeper from the movement.

"Why?"

"These men are breaking the law."

"So what? It's a stupid, cruel law. The few Chinese they bring in don't do any harm and, anyway, the poor devils deserve a break."

Mary shook her head slowly and slightly, her lips touched with a small sadly-wise smile. After an adult lifetime in the territory, it was astonishing how little of the heat and grinding dust showed in her face.

"And you still hate Sergeant Lawson," she said. "You won't side with him on anything. Not even on the law."

Barlow had felt like shaking his head then, too, like a fighter who, having been hit, needs to shake himself back to clarity. This was an old and unresolved conflict. Sergeant Lawson, sitting big and square and pompous in his one-man post sixty miles to the south-west, by the stock route river crossing, was the type of man Barlow never could have liked, even if Lawson hadn't, on that blazing day five years before, arrested him on a baseless charge of cattle stealing.

The circuit judge had dismissed the case for want of evidence; Barlow was freed, but he had been deeply humiliated. He had spent five sweltering days in the police post's lock-up, had been treated like a criminal through sheer stupidity, and he knew that once mud was thrown, some stuck. So he had hated Lawson with a bitter, all-but-consuming hatred which, even though it mellowed with the years, had never really disappeared.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He had tried to convince Mary that it was all forgotten, and for long periods she believed, or pretended to believe him. Then, out of some careless remark, her suspicions would be renewed. She worried about it, the hate and its effects. In this one thing, the only thing, they lived in impasse. It was something there, in the back of his mind, and they lived round it. But now, with the Chinese, it was out in the open again, worrying Mary and exasperating him.

He had put on a patience he didn't feel, settling his shoulders deliberately, building a cigarette with an unhurried precision of calloused fingers.

"I don't hate Lawson," he said quietly, offering her the old, easy way out. "I don't like him. That's all."

"Ed." She was suddenly tense, shredding his proffered truce with urgent hands. "Don't play games with me. You're still bitter, and you're letting it sway your judgment."

"All right," he said suddenly, bitingly. "I still hate him. But that doesn't mean I'm not right about the smuggling."

"Ed." Mary's voice became deeper. Beseeching.

"Don't you see? This hate is eating you up. You can't think straight."

"Mary," he said quietly, drawing on the cigarette, looking down his nose at it. "You're reading things into this, the way you always do."

She had leaned across to touch him, then stopped, as though repulsed. She sat up stiffly. "It's your duty, as a citizen, to report this plane."

"I've got other duties," he said shortly. "I'm a man, too. I've got duties as a man, duties to mankind."

Then he had watched the worry deepen on her face and wondered about the expression of his feelings. It was true, but where the words had come from he did not know. They were not the sort of words he used; not cattleman's words. He felt sympathy for the Chinese, thought they were having a rough deal, and somehow those simple feelings had been translated into "duties to mankind."

The phrase could have come from some unremembered book, from one of those highflown sermons that travelling missionaries at times delivered in their sitting-room. Duties to mankind. It was true enough, and the pity was that Mary couldn't see it. She could only see his hate for Lawson.

Barlow levered himself off the jeep seat with a sigh, swinging the greasegun easily in his big hand, hearing again the liquid song of Charlie Bigtoe and Tommy Tucker and wondering

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what they would think of duties to mankind. They had, he thought, with darting envy, a simple and philosophic attitude to life. They took it as it came and adapted to its contours. They were first-class stockmen—he could never run Brolga Downs without them—but whenever the mood came upon them, by some strange dictate of the life tides, they shed their boots and jeans and coloured shirts, stripped down to loincloths, took spears and boomerangs, and went roaming in the bush.

They stayed out for days, even weeks, to come back rested, fit and happy, stockmen again, resuming their married lives in the whitewashed cottages where their women waited for them. And now, in the midst of all the white man turmoil, they were getting the urge for walkabout again. Barlow had noticed that they both had boomerangs thrust into their belts. They always carried them there during walkabout gestation, as though the feel of the hard, shaped wood helped promote the mood. No duties to mankind there, Barlow thought ruefully. They *were* mankind.

Then Barlow sensed that he was not alone in the shed, not from some supersensitive attunement, but from an imperfectly observed change of rhythm. He didn't believe in miracles of sixth sense; skilled bushmen didn't. Everything came through observation and identification, from variations of the normal. Now he froze his thinking, cut it right off, and stood perfectly still, listening from inside the mental vacuum he created. And it came again, a jagged slur of breathing. He reversed the greasegun in his hand with a quick flip, waited for the sound again, placed it in the deep shadow behind the harvester, and crossed to the doorway on silent feet to sign-talk Charlie Bigtoe and Tommy Tucker. It always paid to stack the odds.

They advanced on padding feet, the three of them, stalking the breather without too much seriousness. Occasionally tramps tottered through, aimless and harmless for the most part, but sometimes with a nuisance value. The men split at the harvester, one going round the front and two round the back. And then they stopped, looking down at the dusty ground, at the scarecrow thing that sprawled there in exhausted sleep. Thin and frail. Shrivelled. Barlow put the greasegun on the sideboard of the harvester, vaguely ashamed to have it in his hand. Charlie Bigtoe and Tommy Tucker leaned far forward, peering with big eyes, their broad black faces sagging with pity and concern.

"Chinese," Barlow said, feeling the stirring of a vast uneasiness, a touch of fate, a sense of arriving at some crossroads of the mind.

"Bin come from dat plane, mine tinkit," Charlie Bigtoe said.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tommy Tucker pointed at the bare feet, sticking bonily from the torn blue overalls the man wore, and they were black with dried blood.

"Bin walk longtime plenty fast," he said. "Bin someone after 'im, like dust come dis way now."

"What dust?" Barlow demanded sharply.

Tommy Tucker waved a hand towards the hills, the airstrip. "Dat way. Maybe five, maybe six mile out."

Barlow dropped to his knees and shook the Chinaman, softly at first, then more roughly when he did not come awake. But not too roughly. The man was a bag of bones that could easily be shaken into dry component parts. Then the eyes opened slowly, dark slits that grew almost round with fear, and he was trying to scramble away. But Barlow grabbed his right hand and began to shake it, smiling and nodding to make his friendship clear. It worked. The man sat up, was still, a young-old man with a sunken mask of suffering for a face. And then Barlow saw the long angry furrow of a bullet wound across his shaven head.

"What's this?" He pointed.

The Chinaman stared a moment, then used his fingers to make a gun, gesturing in the general direction of the hills. He put two fingertips on the ground, and made the fingers run, stumbling and falling as they went. Someone out there had tried to kill him and he had run away. And that someone, Barlow guessed, was on the way now to settle the account. What more, what were the rights of the case, the background, he could not guess as yet. The Chinaman could have started it, although from his condition it seemed unlikely. The man was ill, in addition to his exhaustion, and he had obviously been in a bad way before he set out on his desperate flight. Barlow rose abruptly to his feet and stood back, thinking, figuring quickly. He did not know how many men were coming from the plane, but he knew they would be tough. Traffickers in human cargo would not be gentle men.

"Charlie," he said. "Tommy. Take this man into the scrub and keep him hidden. Quickly. Don't leave tracks."

The stockmen didn't hesitate, but stripped off their boots. They moved so quickly it was certain they had anticipated him. They stooped together and hauled the Chinaman to his feet. But he collapsed, so they swung him between them and made for the wide back door. Barlow walked behind them, taut and watchful, saw them pad quickly round and behind the house, their big bare feet like cushions on the hard-baked ground, and disappear into the scrub.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

From the front garden of her cottage, Maudie Bigtoe shaded her eyes to stare.

Barlow waved to her and went back to the shed, got a roll of fencing-wire, a pair of heavy pliers, and began unnecessarily strengthening the stockyard fence, working from the outside. He had thought at first to wait on the verandah of the house, but realised that would have brought Mary out to meet the callers —with imponderable results if she should identify them. It was safer at the stockyards, where he could play his cards in simulated innocence, test the men and determine his course of action, free of the sort of storm that Mary might provoke. Free, that is, within the new concept that was growing in him, that had started from the time he had first seen the Chinaman, when he had felt that touch of fate.

Ten minutes and two feet of wire reinforcement later the truck arrived, bursting from the scrub track into the cleared space round the homestead, pulling up in an unmannerly cloud of dust some few feet from the stockyard. Barlow straddled his pliers across the top rail and put down his fencing-wire, like a methodical man about to enjoy a break. His big face was calm but his mind was working swiftly. The truck, complete with canvas canopy, would be the one they used to transport fuel, he reasoned, and take off their Chinese. They wouldn't fly the plane south over the more populated areas.

The two men who swung down from the cabin were tough, dressed in grubby khaki shirts and slacks, hatless, and with pistols bulky at their hips. The driver was Australian, big, red-faced, and carrot-haired, with a reckless brutality about him. The other, and he had to be the pilot, was slight and dark, with a thin black moustache and a scruff of facial stubble, black eyes, and a hard, cruel mouth. Probably Portuguese, Barlow thought.

" Howdy," the Australian said, stumping to the fence, with the pilot catfooting just behind, darting black eye-shafts at the house and outbuildings.

" Good day," Barlow said.

" We're lookin' for a man," Red-face said curtly. " Thought you might've seen him. Chinese. Got a bullet wound on the scalp."

Barlow rubbed his hands on his trousers, wishing he had a rifle leaning against the fence, but knowing it would have ruined his act of innocence. " I'm Ed Barlow," he said. " This is my place: Brolga Downs."

Red-face nodded shortly. " We reckoned he'd head this way."

No names, Barlow thought. Aloud, he said, " How come the bullet wound? "

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Madman," the Portuguese said in soft but deadly tones. "We take him south to hospital in our truck here, but he grow sick . . . want to fight. We camp out there, past your hills, for tie him up, but he snatch gun . . . my gun." He slapped the pistol at his hip for emphasis. "Thees one. An' try kill himself."

Red-face nodded gravely, pulling his mouth in a grimace.

"We tried to grab him, but he run."

The teamwork shrieked rehearsal, and if Barlow had needed anything further to tell him they were lying it was Red-face's spurious gravity. Of course they are lying about the plane; that was to be expected. Smugglers didn't advertise. But they were lying too about the Chinaman, who was very far from mad. And Barlow detected a callousness, almost of contempt, behind their plausibility. He felt a cold rage growing in him, more searing, more bitter than anything he had felt for Sergeant Lawson; for this was not about himself, but for others. For all the illegal migrants these men had carried and planned to carry in the future.

These men confirmed what his mind had already constructed without his bidding, a thought-picture of what had happened at the plane. These men had tried to kill a sick man because he had been a burden, a risk of disclosure, the way slave-ship captains in the old days had thrown their cargoes overboard at the first sign of capture by a man-o'-war. Or perhaps when the other Chinese had been stowed aboard the truck, they had tried to force him back on to the plane, to be dropped into the smiling Timor Sea.

And Barlow knew then, as he had known instinctively since he had first seen the fugitive, what it was he had to do. Despite his sympathy for the Chinamen, he had to stop the trade. He had to take these men and give them to the police, to Sergeant Lawson of the rock-hard head, who was the sole residence of authority. And he wouldn't be doing it for Mary's reasons, the breaking of the law, but because of their brutality; because it was the only way to protect other men, other hopeless, homeless men who would give their lives in trust.

"And what makes you think he came this way?" he asked evenly.

"He's a town man," Red-face said, "an' this is the only house." He grinned, suddenly, brutally, without humour. "And we found some tracks back at that creek crossing. You know, the one just before you get here."

"Well, that narrows the field," Barlow said. He ran a square hand ruminatively across his jaw, thinking that it was probably the first true thing that they had said, but wanting to appear

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

helpful. He needed to stall for time. It was one thing to resolve to take them; another to figure how.

"Give me a moment and I'll get my rifle," he said easily. "I'll help you search."

"Why, thanks," Red-face said. "That's real nice."

"We got the guns," the Portuguese said harshly. "Why you want to bring one?"

"Forget it, Silva," Red-face snapped. "Sure he wants a gun."

Barlow went up to the house, fifty yards away, and took a light repeater from the gun-rack in the hall, moving quietly so as not to attract Mary's attention. He could hear her bumping away at housework somewhere about the kitchen. He loaded the rifle from a box above the rack, held steady for a moment, making sure he was under control, then turned towards the door. He was going to walk down there to the stockyard, bland-faced and pacing steadily, and put the rifle on them before they had time to think about getting out their pistols. But as he went out on to the verandah, eyes searching for their target, they were each side of the door. He was neatly caught between them.

"Well, let's go," he said steadily. "We'll try the outbuildings. See if he's crawled in somewhere."

They combed through the implement shed, the feed barn, and the fuel dump, with Barlow always in the middle. And they did it cleverly. Real professionals. If Barlow had not intended to get the drop on them he would never have noticed their suave positioning. As it was, it grated on him, drove him to anger and frustration. There seemed no way of carrying out his plan, and yet there had to be. They started on the stockmen's homes, those neat whitewashed cottages he had built for Bigtoe and Tucker and their workmates. And there he found his chance.

Maudie Bigtoe, Charlie's wife, was still in her patch of garden, dusting beans against red spider, keeping tabs, a big broad-shouldered woman with a smiling face and a quick intelligence. Barlow touched his throat casually, in the native finger-talk sign for enemies, and saw her black eyes gleam.

"Maudie, you see any strange man today?" He paused, letting her wait for his meaning, balancing on his nerve edges. "Like out in the scrub? Any man out there you see?"

She looked with interest at the men on either side of Barlow, at their watchfulness, at their loosely holstered pistols. "Yair boss," she said at last. "Dat feller way." And she jerked her head towards the piece of scrub where Charlie, Tommy and the Chinaman were hiding. "Seen strange feller all right dat way."

Barlow had to take a grip on himself to stop his relief from

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

showing. "Well, gentlemen," he said carefully. "Lead on."

Red-face grinned. Triumphantly. "My honour."

So Barlow followed Red-face with Silva close behind, walking between two guns that would not hesitate to leap out and fire, between two men who had been doing something he had once imagined to be humane, but discovered, face-to-face, to be inhuman, brutal, because these men were so.

He was going to take them into the scrub because he had two trusted helpers there, Charlie Bigtoe and Tommy Tucker, who did not care a cuss about the issues, but would fight for him. He was taking them into the scrub because he could not handle them in the open. But once inside the trees, the advantage would be his despite all their manœuvres. He would have as allies two of the finest bushmen in the world, two shadows . . . Just the same, there was a tight band round his throat. His mouth was dry.

Inside the line of trees the brash light of the day was filtered, and the peopled silence of the homestead became murmurous with small noises. Red-face and Silva took out their pistols, and Barlow had the chilling feel of Silva's pointed right in the middle of his back. There was no sign of the stockmen, but Barlow was certain at least one of them, probably Charlie Bigtoe, was somewhere close. He couldn't know for sure; he could only guess. And it was on that guess, a guess based on experience it is true, but still a guess, that he was going to act. He had to show them he wanted action, help. And there was only one way to do it.

He eased back the bolt of his rifle. And Silva said quietly, hissingly, from behind, "You do not need that, mister. We have guns."

"Sure," Red-face said, turning and grinning evilly. "You might trip and shoot someone."

Then the dry, throaty rattle of a brush turkey sounded out to the right, fairly close, a little to the rear. And Barlow's senses leapt, for there were no turkeys so near the house. He stepped up close to Red-face.

"What's that?" Silva rasped, jerking his head round.

Barlow saw the head jerk and knew his chance had come. He cocked the rifle swiftly, jumping round in front of Red-face and thrusting the rifle into his belly. "Hold it," he snapped at Silva, watching the boil of fury in the dark face, the trembling brink of violence in the pistol hand.

"So you know," Red-face said flatly, his blue eyes cold and hard, his mouth a trap. "You bloody fool. We have to kill you now."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"You first," Barlow said. "Tell your pal to drop his gun."

"Like hell," Red-face said. "You won't shoot." He grinned. "You haven't got that sort of guts."

"Maybe I don't need it," Barlow said, and then he was sure of it because the shadow had moved again, not far from Silva. He waited a breath-held moment. Then he heard the whistle of swift flight, saw a dark flash in the air . . . and a boomerang crashed into Silva's head. The man dropped down without a sound, without a kick or flutter, just dropped softly to the ground.

"Turn round," he said to Red-face harshly. "You've got a job to do."

They made a slow procession, Red-face carrying Silva, and the two stockmen cradling the sick Chinaman. And while Bigtoe and Tucker sat on guard with rifle and captured pistols, Barlow went racing into the house.

"Mary," he called. "Mary." She came from the kitchen and met him at the hall door, a rapt, tense expression on her face. "Get on the radio," he said. "Call Lawson and tell him we've got some prisoners."

"I have," she said. "I saw you coming."

"You knew?" He stared at her, seeing her expression for the first time. "You knew what was happening?"

She nodded jerkily. She was under the after-stress of excitement. "I saw the boys carry off that Chinaman, then the two men came—they looked so horrible, I guessed who they were." Then she smiled, a little tremulously, betraying the tension she was trying so hard to hide. "I watched you. I feared you were helping them."

Barlow stared again. He opened his mouth to speak, but she slid her arms round his neck and buried her face in his shoulder.

"Oh, Ed," she whispered. "I prayed you'd see it my way and call the police." She straightened and looked into his eyes. "And now you have."

"Look," Barlow said, then stopped as her lips closed on his mouth. And when the kiss had finished, and she was looking up at him with shining eyes, with happiness glowing on her face, he knew a small deception didn't matter.

"The law's the law," he said. "You were right."

Some time later, he knew, she would get round to thinking about the Chinaman, wanting to fit him in. He'd have to concoct a story to cover that. And it would be good. He wouldn't have any shadow on this new relationship. This soft communion. He'd even speak nicely to Lawson when he came. Shake his hand . . . And hope this time the façade of forgotten bitterness would remain intact.

© Edward Lindall 1963

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Keep off ! Keep off !
You are standing in to danger.

FLOTSAM

BY EDMUND GILLIGAN

WHERE her foal lay sighing his brief life away, the wild mare slouched in misery, her eyes staring darkly down upon the sand her hoofs had trampled. A mild westerly lifted and let fall the loops and tangles of her chestnut mane. Neither wind nor gale could lift the mane entirely because it sagged so heavy and fell so far that it touched the higher ripples of the dune when she swayed. A sunbeam slanted down out of westering clouds. A ripple of copperish light passed across her mane and faded in the blotches of sweat drying on her ribs.

She shuddered constantly. She kept turning her head in an awkward way towards the Atlantic, where green, spray-capped breakers heaved loudly among the ruins of vessels, ancient and new, that had been lost on the ever-changing bars and shoals of Sable Island. Either in despair or in search, her nostrils flared at times to take in the rising wind and its odours.

She did not turn her glance towards the foal. It seemed that she could no longer bear to look at him, huddled in the nest of cranberry bushes where she had borne him in such joy two mornings since. Short-lived, indeed, had been her joy. He had been her first foal; nevertheless, by the instinct of the wild herd she knew that he could never really belong to her. He would never run by her side among the colts of Sable, nor drink by her at the rain ponds, nor graze the marsh hay and the strawberries, so rich a crush between the teeth after salt forage.

This fate had befallen her foal because those very things—hay and leaves and berries—had been scarce during the winter past.

In January, just when her milk should have started its abundance for him, she had wandered hungry. Three storms, blowing hail from the distant mainland of Nova Scotia, had ripped the hay out and the hailstones had cut to shreds the berry leaves. At the time, because she was heavy with him, she had eaten even the seaweed strewn along the high-water mark. All such forage had not given her milk. The spring growths had

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

come too late. Now he lay there, his small lips dry, his heart failing, because she had no milk.

Around her, the shadows of evening advanced across the dunes. There now the cranberry flourished in early summer leafing and the strawberry sent out faintly a fragrance of leaves and buds. Other fragrances came to her keen sense from the marshes and the ponds of winter rain, where many foals of other springtimes had walked by their dams.

She wheeled roughly away and returned. Out of the darkness under the boughs his fevered eyes stared beseechingly.

The struggle began once more. She knew what this must be: her foal rising to his legs, there to totter and hold up his yearning lips. Fear of his death, death in her presence, bade her flee from that place and seek out his sire among the other mares. Many times, after such harsh winters, she had seen the older mares, half mad with desperate longing for their young, turn from them for ever because they had no milk to give. She fought against this final action. In the end, she came back to the nest, thrust the cranberry boughs aside with her shoulders, and stood over him.

The foal rose on his forelegs and lifted his head in the frantic search for life. With the strength created by his need, he fumbled against her bag, sought out her teats. Her shuddering became a trembling. She let out a moan, as if her own yearning heart deceived her into a pretence that, after all, milk might flow for him.

The little one tumbled over. His hoofs beat ever briefly against the dry leaves of his bed. His eyes closed. He moaned and passed into his fevered sleep.

She sprang from him. She stood in the twilight. The sweat of her anguish again formed dark bands down her sides. The quarter moon of May pierced the tide-rips, a silver horn shedding streams of light and then the second horn glowing in a haze blown by the westerly. Spar by spar, the moon floated up the mastheads of a great sailing-vessel, tipping to ruin by the lagoon, a flat water between two shoals.

She heard the sire whistling to her. Like her, he was a descendant of Iberian horses carried to Sable Island by Portuguese adventurers in the time of Columbus. The island had then stretched a hundred miles from east to west in a half-moon shape. Pastures had flourished and there had been forests. In the centuries since, the Atlantic had washed the island down to a ten-mile wilderness of sand. Salt and hail had destroyed the forests. And in that time, too, the wild horses had lost strength and shapeliness. The sire had not. A "sport," a throwback to the first horses and to later arrivals by shipwreck, he had a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

well-shaped head and haunches that showed good breeding.

Now he called to her. Amid the crying of the terns, swooping above their nests, his summons blew shrill. Three other mares, standing shoulder-deep in the lagoon where they had gone to wash sand and dust from their coats, came out to join him.

She feared his anger. She could not long disobey him. Twice in that day he had trotted up to her nest, stared at his child, and, turning away, bitten her haunch to make her abandon the hopeless one. Now that the night and a gale had come, he wanted all his mares to take shelter among the higher dunes.

She walked towards the dune where he stood, the last of twilight gracing his forehead and its white blaze, a mark that her own son bore. She had scarcely made ten reluctant strides, her untidy tail dragging behind her, when the wind, suddenly hauling to the north-east, carried to her nostrils an unforgettable fragrance: the strong scent of mare's milk flowing. In her young eagerness, she twisted her head round and looked at her own teats. This strange hope failed at once. The fragrance came to her more strongly. She pushed towards it, in a shambling awkwardness.

Between the dune of her nest and the dune to the eastward, she found the source of the fragrance: a mare nursing a foal in a bed of seaweed, sheltered by a great keel of wood. She gave down such a flow of milk that bubbles escaped the eager sucking of a black foal, sturdily at work. This nursing mare had a roached mane and a well-cut tail and a braided forelock. Her coat had been clipped in the winter past because she had been trapped in a paddock by the coast guardsmen. They had fed her on mainland hay and oats, even oats in the sheaf. They did this to make sure that some foals would be well-borne and nourished, for they had need of horses to ride the beach patrols and to draw the wagon that carried the lifesaving gear.

The nursing mare scented the approaching one. In sudden fury, she thrust her foal down and ran forward, her neck stretched, teeth bared. The other fled. At first, she ran towards the gathering herd because weariness made her long to lie warm in shelter by the stud when the gale should begin. She faltered in the deep-worn path. Again the tormenting fragrance of milk swirled on the wind.

The image of her foal drew her back towards the nest. And then, half crazed by her desire to feel the milk in her empty bag, she ate greedily among the green strawberries. She drank at a pool. She forced herself to shuffle lamely to the beach, and there she crunched the bulbous strands of seaweed until she could take no more. While she fed, the beam of the East Light began

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to swing across the shore. Soon the circling beam of the West Light struck against her.

The gale began to shriek through the ribs of shattered Gloucester schooners. High spouts of water blew out of tilted decks of freighters. She trotted through the curves of foam and drooped over her foal to fend off the chilling rain. A runnel of water formed between the roots of two cranberry bushes. There she thrust her muzzle. When her lips ran with water, she held her mouth to his mouth. In famined haste, his tongue rasped against her mouth to take the drops. Thus he drank four times. He swallowed laboriously, sighed, and, with a piteous cry to her, he slept again.

"In the name of heaven, Peter! Can you make out East Light? Can you?"

Straining at the helm of the *Helena*, a small Nova Scotian freighter bound to Halifax from St Pierre, the harbour of the French islands off Newfoundland, Captain Ferguson shouted his appeal to Bowen, the mate.

Before the gale had overtaken the vessel, she had been on her usual homeward route. She had turned to a more southerly course in the hope of sailing into the deeps between Banquereau, the halibut ground, and Sable Island. She had been forced even farther to the southward, and now, the moon down and the wind up, she fought for her life off Sable Island—how far off her captain couldn't tell.

At moonset, hail had started in broadsides that swept so thick against the wheelhouse that a man couldn't see a length of her. A rain of extraordinary violence followed the hail. For a time, this change seemed to have a flattening effect on the combers, but it did not lessen the last and greatest of them, an avalanche of black, white-topped water. It pursued the *Helena* out of shoal water, rolled masthead-high, and fell short of her, only to form again when the vessel wallowed in the trough of a cross-sea. There the comber caught up with her, made a clean breach from stem to stern, buried her completely, and drove her down so deep that she couldn't even shudder. Her boat carried away under the stress of that sea. She battled her way into the clear again. The long plunge had beaten much life out of her and out of them.

The captain, a heavy-shouldered man of middle age, showed the strain of the opening struggle, and he also showed the signs of a jovial visit in the cafés of St Pierre. Despite his ruddy complexion, the mixing lights of hail and rain made him seem pale, an effect increased by the glow off the binnacle. His face seemed

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

puffed. Under the black, fevered eyes, there were distinct pouches, darkly underlined.

His frequent glances at the compass were almost savage, as if he secretly realised how useless a compass direction was in such a tight place. At times, his expression became curiously vacant. Now and then, he bit nervously at the reddish moustache, so lately done over by the French barbers. He spoke gravely to himself when the spokes kicked against his masterly, work-soiled hands, one of them bright with a fancy ring.

Bowen, the mate, waited for the vessel to come out of another reeling action to leeward. He had been keeping his face close to the window on the lee side, which was the starboard. A dour-looking man, carved out of the tough Cape Breton wood, he kept running his hand back and forth across his mouth, a sign of his bewilderment. He hadn't been able to make out any light-house at all, even in the first of nightfall. He was seaman enough to know that their lives depended on his sharp work, for he believed that the *Helena* was driving straight towards a lee shore that he knew all too well from his days in the Lunenberg dories.

The mate didn't reply at once to the captain's shouted question about the East Light. When he answered, he didn't speak loudly enough. Now the captain hadn't shouted just to hear his own voice. There was noise enough in the wheelhouse.

"Hey! Speak up, will you, man? Do you make out one or the other?"

The vessel pitched steeply at that moment. A sea struck her rudder hard and the angle of her descent became so steep that her propeller had no water, or very little. Out of her whirling shaft, a new shudder crackled through her until she straightened out in the trough of a high-tumbling sea.

Bowen didn't dare cross over to the helm on such a tipping deck. He showed an odd reluctance to give his news, just as if he hoped to have better news at any moment. At last, he opened his mouth to a good size and blew out some sentences. "Neither one nor the other do I see—hell and hounds!—and how could I with a hail like that falling? Eh? Do you hear me now?"

Captain Ferguson raised his right hand off the spoke briefly in a vague gesture. It apparently satisfied the mate, who again pressed close against the streaming window.

The captain made another remark, this time directly to the lively wheel. Beads of sweat shone on his forehead. His vessel had been in exactly the same circumstances before. He knew that only the flashing of one light or another, an immense candle-power beating through gale and scud, could give him a safe westerly course. If he raised the East Light to leeward, he might

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

regain the passage between East Bar and the edge of Banquereau. There was a deep called the Gully, where a flooding tide would help her. If it was the West Light that he saw first, he had a fair chance of swinging farther to the south-west and thus reach the calmer lee of Sable Island's West Bar. If he saw no light at all and kept on driving blindly towards the wreck-strewn shore between the two lighthouses, nothing but death awaited him and the *Helena.*

There came a series of baffling breaks in the force of the gale. A less knowledgeable navigator might have believed that the storm had blown itself out. The changes didn't mislead Ferguson. He knew such easier phases wouldn't last long enough for him to swing her head into the wind and, by keeping her there, ride out the blow. Another vessel would have done this much earlier.

He faced a peculiar difficulty: she couldn't tolerate the prodigious strain of coming round against such seas and such a wind. The fault lay in her design. Her wheelhouse lay on her galley and her galley lay on her deck, thus making a superstructure that left her top-heavy. Two seasons earlier, her sister ship, the *Elsa H.*, had foundered in Bay St. George when she had tried to head into a gale driving her to the rocks of Newfoundland. The wind had taken her broadside, had hove her down, and she never came out of it. Ferguson had no reason to expect any other action from the *Helena.*

In another violent descent, this time a rolling one, the vessel nearly wrenched the helm from his hands. He straddled again and heaved in vain to get the wheel down a spoke.

"Lend a hand here, Peter!"

The mate accomplished a staggering passage to the wheel. Their four capable hands were not too many in the next half hour or so. A current of much strength flowed there and gave the *Helena* more trouble. In the end, there came another such break in the gale; the *Helena* recovered sturdily and made a fine crackling of her wood, a sign of its strength and soundness.

Captain Ferguson spoke directly into the mate's ear. "What do you say, Peter? Can I leave the wheel?"

By this, he didn't mean to cast a doubt on the mate's seamanship or courage. He simply wished to go elsewhere—below—for a while.

Bowen's extraordinary response showed that there had been a quarrel between them, possibly quite recently and ashore. At first, his eyes gave out no light at all. They stayed glassy dark, like a lantern flickered out and smoking over. When the vessel fell off to windward, the mate swayed in that direction and the beam

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out of the binnacle struck into his eyes, from which the whitish lids were slowly rising. The eyes gave out a sea-green fire, not very pleasant to see.

To the captain, this gaze had the impact of an unexpected blow. He didn't shrink from it, yet it seemed that he wished to do so. Before he could speak, the mate broke up the pattern by changing his grimness to the tenth part of a smile, rather a rare expression on that face.

He said, "Do mind what you're about down there, Captain."

Ferguson correctly took this as a sign that he might safely leave his post. He moved in short, agile steps to a locker near the companionway and picked up a red-and-white blanket of fine wool to which he had sewn three strips of canvas, one in the middle of the upper edge, the others near the corners. When he shook it out, there appeared a covering of rubber sheeting, also strongly sewn and well-fitted to the cloth.

He said loudly, "I thought this might help her."

The remark clearly had to do with the cause of their quarrel. The trace of affection in the mate's smile vanished. He shouted angrily. "So it's help for her, is it now? Aye! What was the matter, eh? You not willing to lay over a day more against this blow? Wasn't you having gay time enough with the dancing ladies in Café du Nord? Eh? Tell me that, sir."

"I won't be long, Peter."

"Please God you won't be. You'll find her drownded—so you will."

The captain backed down the narrow companionway into the galley; then, watching his chance against the seas piling over her rail, he moved shrewdly on to the deck and, using again his short, wary step, reached a deck-stall that lay close up to the galley. Over its boards and stout corner-posts, he had earlier lashed down a number of tarpaulins. These ran with water, and on the makeshift top-covering a rift of hailstones glittered in the dark. He opened the stall-gate and stepped inside.

"You're all right, are you, ducky? Went down on your own, did you? And not a fall, I hope."

A mare lay there in a liberal depth of straw, somewhat sodden. She was a bay or maybe darker. It was hard to tell because the spray had deadened her colour. In that gloom, her eyes were set off so clearly that their glowing had the quality of amber fire. They were unusually large eyes, somewhat low and wide in the head, a sign of the Arabian strain that had produced not a few racing horses in the French islands. Her ears were thin, well-pointed. In answer to Ferguson's kindly tone, she raised her head a little; then she let it fall in weariness.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I've made this up for you, dearie. There's a good girl. Easy now." He passed the blanket over her back, drew the straps round her forcefully and tied them. The quick warmth of the wool, and the captain's caresses, helped her. She closed her eyes in some measure of content. She moaned just once, a sound soon lost in a rapid fire of harsh blows against the rail nearby. The vessel began the straining ascent of an enormous sea.

For a seaman who carried horses infrequently, Ferguson had a way with them. He kept praising her. Her swollen bag, heavy with milk, bothered him because he knew it bothered her. She had been parted from her foal at the wharf in St Pierre. The last thing Ferguson had done for her there had been to let the foal nurse so that she could be rid of her milk. He hadn't been satisfied by such an abrupt weaning. Had it been a deal on his own account, he wouldn't have done it at all. He had bought the mare at his owner's order, for twelve hundred dollars, her dam having made a pacing success on the Halifax tracks.

"I didn't want to part you two. Him and his white foot upraised and asking where was you going. You know that, ducky, don't you?"

The mare twisted her head up and sent a most intelligent glance at Ferguson and thence to the milk that kept oozing into the straw. He soothed her with his hands and voice, saying, "First chance I get I'll take the milk, dearie. Now rest you easy. Trust me, trust me."

"*She's all right*, Peter."

Once the captain had taken the spokes, the mate, without a by-your-leave, rolled into the captain's room and fell into the bunk. He didn't stay there long. The gale increased to such violence that he couldn't rest. Turn in turn at the helm, or shoulder to shoulder, their courage rising to the final effort, they fought the wheel. They were not surprised when the night sky suddenly cleared. Nor were they encouraged. This change was characteristic of the springtime gales: a placid sky, where the planets and constellations reeled, and following seas constantly running higher and higher.

At four o'clock in the morning, a light began flashing some miles to starboard. Straining forward over the spokes, they tried to count the flashes. They could not do so because of the thickness on the surface. In silence they tried again, and again they failed. A white squall bored directly into the wind. It soon burst upon the *Helena* and slashed her with hail.

The squall drowned the first light. Ten minutes later, the flash of a second light pierced the scud to the westward. They

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

didn't try to count this time. They needed nothing more to tell them that the *Helena* lay on the fatal course.

The captain let her drive onward. He had only the one salvation: to swing her into the gale. To do it and to live, he had only one trick left in his bag. A clockwise current ran over four knots there off Sable. If he could find its impulse under his keel at the right moment, when it turned away from the island, he would have that much more to help his vessel.

A blinker on the West Light began making a signal: *You are standing in to danger. Keep off! Keep off!*

Nevertheless, the captain waited until the day broke and the lights waned in a tide of rose-coloured splendour from the east.

He shouted, "You feel the Clock, Peter?"

"No!"

"Nor I. We go now, just the same, and may the Lord stand by us."

They heaved together at the spokes and began to bring her round. They were not sure she had the power to do it. She answered well and they pushed her hard. At the halfway mark of her wide swing, a sea struck her down. In its battering assault amidships, the sea joined with another. The deck-stall carried away. Even in that clamour, they heard the mare scream amid the tangle of timber and ropes whirling down into the sea. The blanket flapped by the wheelhouse and soared away like a strange sea bird, red wings beating furiously under a white-barred, enormous breast.

His eyes straining sideways to glimpse that telltale flight, the mate groaned in horror. His groan sharpened into a prolonged cry of anguish when the mare herself hove into sight, her fore-feet entangled in ropes, her head and shoulders wreathed in spurts of foam, thick and white as lather. A black sea ran over her, exploded into spray, and beat her down.

"Ah, God help the poor creature!"

The captain cut short the shout and prayer by striking him lightly on his forearm. "Dead by now!" Looking backward while he braced to the wheel, the captain read the repeated signal from the island: *Well done! South! South now!*

To him, this order meant that the weather station on the island had received radio reports of a break in the gale. He pitched his vessel on to her new course . . .

The mare cried out only that one time. She closed her eyes and jaws against the darkness under the sea. The timbers, wrenched by the boarding sea, parted before her first thrust upward. She swam in a circle, a small one, and desperately arched her neck to scan the sky. Terns swooped down to wail.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She blew hard to clear her nostrils. A breaker bounded over her. She yielded to its force. It carried her high. On that crest, she saw the *Helena*, steering out to sea towards a great mass of sun-edged, white clouds.

The vessel lured the mare to a mistake. She struck out boldly on the same course, swimming strong, her tail high and her haunches smoothly answering the unfaltering courage of her heart. She called to the *Helena*. When it kept on, she swam up the next breaker. There, her forehead parting the white crest, she blew again and snuffed in the air.

The island answered to her power of scent. Earth and fresh water, marsh hay and cranberry: those sweet odours poured into her distended nostrils. And more: strong as the barns of home, the fragrance of Sable's wild horses came swirling over the green sea. In her joy, she whinnied a loud trumpeting cry. She called again and again to her kind beyond the breakers, beyond the dunes.

Round she swung and, her haunches gathering for the hard trial, she thrust forward towards the distant beach. A sea caught her up, flung her a length shoreward. In that careening plunge, her quick brain taught her not to swim constantly. She saved her strength until the breaker dropped her and passed; then she struck out, the sea lifting under her barrel. She repeated this three times, her eyes darkening under the strain, her ears laid back.

Her luck ran out. To the left, breakers burst upon a shoal, where there was little water, and that was ebbing. To the right, and even nearer, another shoal ran directly landward, forming the shore of the lagoon. On that shoal, the yellow sand glittered. These salvations were hidden from her rolling eyes. For that reason, she swam directly into the lagoon, kept deep always by the strong undertow. The seaward stream crashed against her chest. She hammered it bravely with her forefeet. Terror shattered her nerve. She began to swim like a dog.

Her heart began to hurt her; and her milk hurt her, too, because she was so full of it, so burdened by the new strain of keeping it. Yet her longing for life, and the very urgency of her milk clamouring to be taken, bolstered her noble heart again. She plunged her head down into the salt and swam there like a seal, beating hard with her tail.

When she surged upwards, she couldn't help calling. To her kind ashore, she blew a shrill appeal. A breaker slanted from the nearer shoal and filled her mouth with sand and salt. She gasped, flung her head over, and coughed the water out. She made one more gallant effort: a steady stroking that lifted her

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

head higher than ever. Yet she gained nothing by it. For the last time, her lovely head raised clear of the foam. She did not yield. She simply struggled in vain. The Atlantic began to strangle her. She beat the sea down. Her forefoot struck sand. She turned towards the shoal and hammered her path through to a rift of weeds. There she fell.

The pleading calls out of the sea had not stirred the wild mare, where she stood over her foal. She herself had often called when, in their play or to clean themselves of island dust, the band had swum in the lagoon. Her lacklustre eyes had no signs of her lively intelligence. She seemed to be losing her own hold on life. There then came across the drying beach the other, longed-for fragrance: milk. Piercing sweet to her amid the common odours of salt and rotting weeds, the fragrance summoned her as before, forced her to stretch out her head.

At once, she saw the outstretched body of the French mare, free of water now and beginning to dry into brilliance. The wild mare stepped cautiously away from her drowsing foal. She trotted down to the beach, snuffing continually the milk scent. She entered the lagoon and, when the sea washed at her knees, she paused to find out what her instinct should tell her to do. Instinct drove her deeper into the water. She turned at once to the right and clambered on to the shoal that formed an edge of the lagoon.

At that moment, the French mare rose to her feet, sagged forward and, hampered by weariness and salt in her eyes, plunged back into the sea and swam away from shore. The island mare ran by her down the shoal and, beyond her, plunged into the sea. She swung towards the swimmer. She came up to the French mare and, just as her mother had once guided her there, she gently struck her muzzle against the streaming shoulder. They joined in the outward passage, then the island mare pressed towards the shoal and the other one, following close, fell once more upon the weed-strewn sand. She breathed in a sobbing fashion. The ebbing tide tugged at her tail and spread it fanwise along the sand.

In a frantic need to know where the milk lay, the island mare snuffed close. The richness of the dripping teats nearly maddened her. She reared and snorted and trampled the sand. Just as the sire had nipped her to drive her from the nest, so she bared her teeth and closed them on the haunch before her.

The French mare struggled to her knees. The other paced slowly in the lead. At the high-water mark, she halted while the stranger lay down, her breathing much easier. She got up again

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and moved steadily nearer the dunes. There she took in the wind, found the scent of water, and became excited by it, the salt had made her so thirsty. She walked into a rain pool and drank.

To the islander, it had been no great task to lead another out of dangerous water. Her own mother had done that for her more than once in her first summer. That performance had been part of the hard life of the wild bands. She could do no more. Her knowledge and shrewdness failed her now. To lead the stranger to her thirsty foal: that was beyond her abilities.

They stood together near the silent nest. The French mare, harassed by longing for her own son and her swelling bag, moaned. In her anguish, she tossed her head, nostrils flaring. At once, her moaning ceased. Her eyes cast out their darkness, became brilliant. She lifted her forefoot strongly. She took two long strides forward. She paused and, her whole body trembling with love for the foal far away at St Pierre, she plunged eagerly towards the nest. Out of its leaves there came to her, in a sweet summons, the scents off the body of the wild foal.

Once again, the moaning came from her. She stepped carefully to the bushes, thrust her shoulders into the branches. In the dappled light, an eye gleamed and closed. The starving foal! She lowered her head and ran her tongue up and down his shrunken sides. She spoke to him. She came closer and straddled him, her bag dripping with life.

The foal raised to his forefeet and struggled to rise all the way. It was all he could do—this last heave upward. He did it. He struck his head bravely against a teat. He failed to find the milk. At the touch of his frantic, searching lips, the French mare shook in her delight.

The foal's terror of death, and his weakness, caused him to fumble in vain. He fell and came up again. Used to such awkward strivings, she bent her head and gently chided him.

At last, he drank. Hastily he slaked his famine out of her plenty. At the giving of her milk, the mare's longing and her pain ran out of her. Her eyes closed in contentment.

In a little while, the foal, answering to the strength and heat of her milk within him, whirled his tail. He drank again and, in the way of mischief, nudged her to keep the new life flowing into him. Soon he was full and lay down and passed into a wealth of sleep. She caressed him and lay down near him. Soon she slept, too, her foster-son safe in the shelter of her shoulders.

The mare of the island came closer. She ran her tongue gently up and down his side, plump with milk. So she caressed him, and the night coming on, she lay down, too, to fend him from the wind, if it should rise in the night. © Edmund Gilligan 1963

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In the Venetian red!

" Let's see, I paid for the lunches on the train, 2,745 lire, and tips to porters, 500 lire—you paid for the taxi to the hotel, 575 lire—I paid tips to the waiters, 400 lire—and you paid for the dinners including the mineral water, 3,930 lire—so I owe you—"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Grandfather took it with him

By GORDON McDONELL

I FEEL, and Zona feels too, that until one of us has put the whole thing down on paper, we shall never really be able to get it out of our systems and live on a normal keel. And, after what happened, I never wish to live upon any other, but soberly balanced, without bias windward or leeward.

Had it not happened when I was actually in the market, had she not been at the particular cash register where I was checking out—six tins of dogfood for Solon, and a tube of shaving-cream, I remember distinctly—then I don't think we should have taken any notice of each other.

Of course, I don't mean I hadn't observed the lights in her hair as she was punching the register and that she was certainly cute, but beyond that, well, it was just a pleasant thing to see a nicer-looking girl than usual. I was preoccupied at the time, thinking I must be careful not to be late in picking up Laura for the tennis finals, especially after the bawling out I had given her only the night before for her chronic unpunctuality.

I had to be at her place by eleven thirty, because we were due for lunch on the club lawn with the Farnhams at noon, and I was calculating whether I could make it or not. Five minutes back to the hotel, then allow say ten minutes for Solon and another fifteen for picking up Laura, then half an hour for the drive to the tennis club. The big clock in the market said ten forty-nine. Ten forty-nine, that's how I knew the exact moment when it happened, for it happened right then, as I was in the act of looking at the clock and calculating, and Zona was ringing up the total on the register.

I don't know how to describe the feeling exactly. There was a little physical jar, rather like the jar of an earthquake, and for a moment everything went blurred and fuzzy and unreal and there was a ringing in my head. It cleared off as quickly as it had come, and I steadied myself at the counter and thought, Well, my lad,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

no more martini evenings like last night. I really was a little scared, being only twenty-eight and healthy as an ox.

I took my wallet out to pay, and looked up for her to hand me the slip and call the total. There she was, this girl, standing with both hands on the counter; she had gone white and was trembling a little.

"What's the matter?" I said. "Do you feel ill?"

She looked at me, puzzled for a moment, as slowly the colour came back into her cheeks, and she said, "No, I'm all right," and gave an apologetic little laugh. "I felt funny for a moment." She blushed a little and became businesslike as though embarrassed at talking like that to a stranger, and said, "Dollar twenty-three, sir," and began putting the things in a bag and handed me the slip.

I looked down at the slip to hide that I was thinking fast. Could this be some kind of woman's trick? I mean, I'm so used to being cagey. That's not my conceit. It's just plain self preservation as the heir to Grandfather's millions. But the thought went as fast as it came, for she couldn't have organised it so that we both felt the same at the same moment even if she knew who I was. It had always been one of Grandfather's strictest injunctions—to me and to the whole organisation—that my identity must be kept secret; otherwise my job of being an ordinary shopper in his markets would lose its value. Everyone would be on his toes, saying, "Watch it, there's young Yarnell," and my value as Grandfather's spy would be nullified. It was a job I hated, but I was not quite such a fool as to cross Grandfather, so grudgingly I did it, tried to report as few people as possible and concentrated on constructive suggestions that would be helpful to the chain as a whole. But I digress . . .

As I was saying, I was just looking down at the slip, total one dollar twenty-three cents as she had said, and underneath the printed *Thank you*, but the ink was green and our ink is red. And then I saw ANSON'S MARKET was stamped on it. I was really startled and looked up. The girl was handing me the change from two dollars, and as she counted it I saw ANSON'S on her overalls. I turned round quickly. There it said on the sign, big as life over the front, ANSON'S MARKET.

And it should have said YARNELL'S.

I was certain I had come to our own Santa Monica branch of Yarnell's. But there was no doubt about my being in Anson's.

I took my change quickly, without a word, and got out of there fast and went to the carpark, and there was the convertible all right. I realised then that those martinis had done a worse job than I'd thought. Certainly I had not been concentrating as I

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

left the hotel, but the hangover wasn't bad enough for me to drive into Anson's instead of Yarnell's. I drove right back to the hotel and parked the car, thinking that it would never do for Laura to hear about this. I held the door open for Solon to jump down from his back perch.

I stood waiting for Solon to jump. And then I saw that he was not there. He was not in the car at all.

Now I began to feel genuinely sick. Solon was my grandfather's pride and joy, and I was caring for him while he was in Chicago. His instructions about Solon had been even more detailed than any about my job. I would be in real trouble if I lost Solon. Besides, I loved Solon dearly myself.

I leapt into the car and raced back to Anson's. It wasn't like Solon to jump out. The only time he had ever done it was once when a cat was chased right close by and it was too much even for Solon. I thought as I turned in the carpark that it was probably another cat and prayed to high heaven he was still in the neighbourhood.

He was not in the carpark, so I went into the market, and looked round, but I couldn't see him anywhere. And then, as I was looking, I became aware that something very strange was going on. All around me people were acting oddly. Strangers were talking excitedly to each other all over the market, and the whole place had come to a standstill. I could not make out what was the matter.

I went up to the girl at the cash register. She was standing there, looking kind of tense. She recognised me at once as I came up.

"Oh," she said, "I'm so glad you came back—you were here when it happened."

"What did happen?"

"Tell me," she said. "Did you come to Anson's Market this morning when you first arrived, or did you come to Yarnell's?"

I stared at her. For a moment I could not speak.

"What's that about Yarnell's?"

She said slowly, "This morning I was working at Yarnell's. Then, just after I saw you, I'm working in Anson's. Half the people here thought they were in Yarnell's. Didn't you think you were too?"

I went on staring at her. Then I nodded my head and I said, "Yes, I did." I tried to think, but of course I couldn't think. I just stood there looking at her and she stood looking at me. I was trying to keep myself from being as scared on the outside as I felt inside. I said stupidly, "Then that's where Solon is."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Solon?"

"Grandfather's dog. That's where he must be."

At that she burst into tears.

"Who cares about your grandfather's dog at a time like this?"

I leaned over the cash register and put my arm round her shoulders. It didn't make any difference that we were in a public market, Anson's or Yarnell's or wherever the heck it was. Everyone was much too busy yelling at everyone else, and the whole place was in a panic.

"Come on," I shouted above the growing din. "We're getting out of here."

She looked up at me through her tears.

"Where shall we go?"

"We're going to Yarnell's," I said firmly. "It's only two blocks away and that's where we're going. Come on."

Together we pushed our way out of the place. People were streaming out of the doors. Everybody was starting a wild rush to Yarnell's.

Well, we went to Yarnell's. That is, we ran a hundred yards up the street to where Yarnell's Santa Monica store has stood for the past five years.

We saw the whole thing a few yards away. We saw Yarnell's corner. And that corner was empty. It was a completely empty site.

The girl and I stood there together, staring at it, and the crowd got thicker; all around us people were talking excitedly to each other and exclaiming. There was no doubt about it: Yarnell's had simply vanished off the face of the earth.

That was how it all began. I don't remember exactly what came next. A lot of things were happening all at once. The girl's hand on my arm was shaking, and I felt I was shaking too, and we found ourselves asking this person and that person if he had been in Yarnell's at ten forty-nine, and they had, and some of them had found themselves in Anson's, and some in Selph's, and some in the G & T, none of them inconvenienced in any way, since they had all bought exactly what they intended to buy in Yarnell's, and their cars had all been parked in the market to which they had been, as you might say, transported. At ten forty-nine exactly.

After some minutes of all this milling around and talking and exclaiming, the girl was muttering something to herself: mass hypnosis, it sounded like.

"What's that?" I asked her.

"Don't you see," she said. "It's the only possible explanation

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

for such a phenomenon. An exceptional case of mass hypnosis."

"What do you know about mass hypnosis?" I asked.

"I'm studying psychology," she said. "For my post-graduate fieldwork I'm studying crowd psychology in that job in Yarnell's."

"Yarnell's? You mean Anson's, don't you? Look on your overall."

She looked down at her overall, and when she looked up at me, you could see she was really shaken.

"It said Yarnell's this morning when I put it on."

"How does mass hypnosis explain that?" I said.

At once I was sorry, for her face began to pucker up again. I put my hand over hers quickly.

"This calls for something drastic," I said. "What we need is a martini."

"I th-think you're right."

I took her to the car and drove to the hotel. She began to get a hold on herself.

"What's your name?" I said.

"Zona. Zona Mallon. What's yours?"

"Peter."

"Peter what?"

"Smith," I said. "I'll get you a coat and we'll go to the lounge bar."

I parked and opened the door for her and we went into the hotel. I went over to the hat-check girl whom I knew pretty well.

"This young lady needs a coat," I said. "Just for fifteen minutes, and you can have it back. You see how it is."

The girl looked at Zona and smiled.

"I'll see what I can do, Mr. Yarnell," she said.

She turned and got a coat and gave it to Zona.

"Here you are, dear."

But Zona was staring at me, puzzled.

"Is your name Yarnell?" she asked.

I took the coat from the hat-check girl and put it round Zona's shoulders.

"Look—let's not go into all that now. We came for martinis, remember?"

I got her into the lounge bar and ordered two martinis, very dry, and the bartender smiled and said, "Yes, Mr. Yarnell; how are you today?"

She said, "You told me your name was Smith."

"I tell everyone that because I work for my grandfather and he doesn't like anyone to know who I am."

"I see," she said. "The normal phobia to be observed in the wealthy."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

" Ouch," I said.

She raised her glass and we toasted each other.

" You deserved it," she said. " Tell me, is this some kind of publicity stunt? "

I swallowed my olive and looked at her. " How could it be? "

She sipped her martini reflectively.

" I admit," she said, " I've never heard of the deliberate induction of mass hypnosis, but I suppose it might be possible to hire an illusionist who—"

" Look," I said, " how did you get into an Anson's overall? " She thought about that.

" I can't believe I'm actually on the payroll. Who could have done that? And when? "

I reached for the telephone on the bar and lifted the receiver and dialled.

" Who are you ringing? " she asked me.

" Anson's Market. I'm going to find out."

The market came on the line. It sounded as if some form of mass murder was in progress at the other end. A voice said, " Anson's Market."

" I want to find out if you have a Miss Zona Mallon registered on your books, please, and if so when she was enrolled."

" Say, what is this? There's plenty going on around here right now without—"

" This is the police. Make it snappy."

" O.K., O.K. What was the name again? "

" Mallon. Zona Mallon. Check it right away."

I heard a clang as he put the receiver down on the desk and then I could hear all the market confusion going on in the background as I waited.

Beside me Zona said, " But it's impossible."

" The whole thing's impossible. I want to find out just how well organised it is. So far, except for temporary shock, no one's been truly inconvenienced. I—"

A voice came over the wire, another voice this time.

" Police? "

" Talking," I said.

He sounded very bewildered.

" There *is* a Miss Zona Mallon registered here. Registered this morning. In my own handwriting. But I've never seen her."

" You will," I said. " She's working at the second cash register from the end."

" That's new too. And she ain't there. Ain't nobody at that register right now, and we sure need someone."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

" She'll be right over. Fifteen minutes."

" I still don't get it. How do you know—I mean, how come—when did I—?"

I stopped his floundering.

" Just one more thing. Do you know what time that entry was made?"

" Well, it wasn't made at a quarter to eleven, that I'm sure of. But it's certainly there now."

" O.K. She'll be right over. See that she gets good treatment."

I hung up and turned to Zona.

" Well, you're on the payroll. Just as I suspected. In the man's own handwriting too." I swirled my martini round. " That is quite some organisation. And I don't mean Anson's either. You heard what all those people said. They all found themselves in other markets getting just the things they had been going to buy anyway. And their cars were transported too. Presumably the employees were transferred to other markets as you were. Nobody's been inconvenienced in any material way, just psychologically for a while, that's all."

" Huh. What about your grandfather? He's lost a store, hasn't he?"

" Grandfather! Suffering Moses! And it took you to remind me of him!"

I grabbed the telephone again as she stared at me. I called the head office. For a moment I wondered if perhaps I should not cut through all that and call Chicago direct where the main office was, and Grandfather. But I decided it was best to do it this way, not only more correct, but also it saved me from having to talk to Grandfather before I had found Solon.

The operator came back on the line.

" Sorry, sir, the number has been disconnected."

" What do you mean? It can't possibly be disconnected. That's Yarnell's West Coast Headquarters. This is Mr. Yarnell junior speaking."

" I'm sorry, sir, but that number has been disconnected."

" By whom? When was it disconnected?"

" I do not have that information, sir."

I put the receiver down and turned to Zona.

" That's strange—our main office has been cut off."

" Perhaps," she said calmly, " that's disappeared too."

I stared at her. I picked up the telephone again and called the club. It was right opposite the office building. I had Bobby Pritchard paged in the bar.

" Hullo, Peter," he said. " Are you all right?"

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Why shouldn't I be?"

"Well—I was worried. I mean, I called you at the store and they said it was disconnected and—Peter, it hasn't—disappeared by any chance, has it?"

"What makes you say that, Bob?"

"Because . . ." he hesitated.

"I understand, Bob. You mean the downtown offices have gone too?"

He began to shout.

"Just an empty site. Everyone's going crazy. There's a big crowd gathered. Everyone is—"

"I know. It's the same here."

"Santa Monica too, eh? Did you hear about the Hollywood one?"

I said, "Bob, I've got to go. Got to clear the line. Got to call Grandfather."

"Sounds as if you'd best have a double martini."

"That's just what I'll do. See you, Bob."

I hung up. "You were right, Zona," I told her. "And the Hollywood store too." I ordered two more martinis.

She said slowly, "Peter, maybe they've all gone."

"But there are one thousand and twenty-nine of them, all over the country."

The telephone rang. The bartender answered it and handed it to me. "For you, Mr. Yarnell."

I took it from him, and a female voice said, "Peter."

It was Laura. At once I looked at the clock over the bar. It was a quarter to twelve.

"Laura, darling, I'm terribly sorry. Something frightful has happened. You'd better call Arnold and Mary at the club and tell them we can't make it. It's awful, Laura, I don't know how to apologise, I—"

Her voice cut in, very affectionate and sympathetic.

"I know, darling. I've just heard the news on the radio. You poor Peter."

"You mean it's on the radio? Well, that's very sweet of you to take it like that, Laura. I just can't understand it, can you?"

"Well, after all, darling, he was pretty old, let's face it."

"What?"

"Well, darling, he was ninety-three."

"Laura, can you tell me exactly what it said. I have a particular reason for asking."

"Sure. As well as I can remember, it said, 'We have just heard that Colonel Jonathan Peter Yarnell passed away in Chicago today. He was ninety-three. The empire built up by

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the famed industrialist, including the Yarnell chain of stores and the Yarnell shipping line, will all pass into the hands of his grandson, Peter Yarnell, the sole heir.' "

" Is that all it said, Laura? "

" All I heard. Why, what else, Peter? " she asked quickly.

" Maybe you'd better turn it on again. I think there'll be some more news breaking any minute."

" Peter, what is it? "

" Got to go now, dear. Don't forget to call the Farnhams, will you? "

" Sure, but can't you tell me what—? "

" I could, but you'll soon hear. Can you call me later on, dear? I'm sort of rushed now."

" Of course, darling. Good-bye."

I turned to Zona. She was looking at me over her martini glass with a frosty expression.

" Who's Laura? " she said.

" Laura's my fiancée, I guess. Did you hear what she told me? Grandfather has just passed away."

" So he went too, did he? What do you mean, you guess? What kind of a fiancée do you have to guess at? "

" Well, she's never actually committed herself, not before, but just now she seemed— Listen, didn't you hear what I said? Grandfather has just died."

" I heard you. And maybe that's why your fiancée is a little less of a guess, don't you think? Or *don't* you think? "

I looked at the girl. Now I was mad too. It was unreasonable.

" I can't discuss my fiancée's character with you," I said.

She got up, put down her glass, and took off her coat. She handed it to me, and stood there in the lounge bar of the Hotel Albemarle in her Anson's overall.

" Thanks for the drinks and the coat, Mr. Yarnell. And I hope you lost the other stores too."

At that she turned on her heel and walked right out, with everyone in the bar staring at her. For the first time I noticed there was a definite glint of red in her hair as she passed the big windows.

I did think of running after her to get her a cab or something, but then the bartender called me to the telephone again, and I thought, Well, if she wants to be like that, then the walk won't hurt her. It was the last I saw of her for a while, an overalled figure stalking out of that door, her hips swinging nicely. I took the receiver from the bartender, and a girl asked if I was Peter Yarnell.

" Speaking," I said.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I have a telegram addressed to Peter Yarnell, Hotel Albemarle, Santa Monica. 'Deeply regret to inform you that your grandfather passed away twelve forty-nine this afternoon. In view certain developments suggest you fly here at once. Signed, Geraughty.' Do you wish a confirmatory copy to be posted to you, sir?"

"Thanks."

I hung up and thought, Twelve forty-nine. Why had that a familiar ring? Then I got it. Twelve forty-nine in Chicago was ten forty-nine on the coast. The exact moment that the stores disappeared. He had died at the same moment. It was strange . . . very strange. And what did Geraughty mean, in view of certain developments? How like a lawyer not to say what he meant. I had a mind to ring him up, but two factors decided me against it. One was Geraughty's own nature. If he wished to tell me over the telephone, he would have done so. It was clear, knowing Geraughty, that he intended to talk face to face.

And the second thing that prevented me was that at that particular moment bedlam began to break loose in the lounge bar of the Hotel Albemarle in Santa Monica.

I should have beat it one martini earlier. 'They' had arrived in a body. 'They' being the press. Flash bulbs were popping, men and women asking questions, shouting questions, screaming questions.

"Mr. Yarnell, have you any explanation of these disappearances?"

"Mr. Yarnell, what about the taxation aspect? Don't you think the Federal Government—?"

"Mr. Yarnell, did your grandfather say anything to you that—?"

"Mr. Yarnell, if all the reports coming in follow the same pattern—?"

I climbed up on top of the bar and yelled at the lot of them. And when I want to yell, I can do it better than most.

"Will you shut up a moment!"

There was a dead silence.

"Now then, let's take it one by one. First, I know less than you. My grandfather said nothing to me. I haven't had a chance to listen to the radio yet. I only know that the stores in Los Angeles disappeared at the moment he died." I pointed to a man with a portable radio, the man who had spoken of reports coming in. "What reports are you getting?"

"Los Angeles!" he said scornfully. "It's much worse than that. Wait, here are some more returns coming in right now."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He turned up the radio and we all stood silent, listening to the excited voice of the announcer.

"Here are more flash returns on the disappearance of the Yarnell Empire. Georgia: one in Savannah, two in Atlanta—that brings Georgia's total up to eight so far. Texas—here's more on Texas, ladies and gentlemen—yes, as we feared, now we have the total returns in from Texas: seventeen. Other states are all following the same pattern. Maine: seven. Washington State: five . . ."

He turned it down and looked at me.

I said, "It's . . . a landslide."

From behind the bar came another radio station which the bartender had just switched on.

"Radio messages have been sent out to the *S.S. Yellowstone* en route from New York to Southampton, the *S.S. Yorick* en route from Cape Town to Rio, and the *S.S. Yanick* en route from San Francisco to Hong Kong. Still no replies to any of these messages. More calls are going out to the ships, but it looks as though—"

The radio was turned off abruptly, and George turned to me. His former geniality was absent.

"That will be three dollars you owe me for those martinis, Mr. Yarnell."

There was a little silence.

I gave George exactly three dollars.

Then someone said, "It's beginning to look as if he took it with him, isn't it?"

Strangely enough, nobody laughed. They looked at me.

I said, "Grandfather was capable of anything."

"But, Mr. Yarnell, think of the sociological consequences. If he has discovered such a secret as this then others will follow. No one will invest in a one-man—"

I cut in.

"There won't be any sociological consequences," I said. "You don't seem to appreciate the fact that my grandfather was unique. No one else will ever find it out. How can they?"

"How did he?"

"If I ever find that out, gentlemen, you will be the very last to hear of it. And now, if you will excuse me, I'd like to go to my room."

I got to my room all right, but as I walked in at the door, the telephone by the bed was ringing. I picked up the receiver.

"Yes?"

"Mr. Yarnell, this is the management. Regarding your

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

account for the past week, Mr. Yarnell. It was due yesterday, and—"

"Don't worry. I'll settle it immediately. In cash. Forty-seven dollars, wasn't it?"

"Forty-seven, sixty-five, Mr. Yarnell. You—er—you're sure you have the cash with you, sir?"

"Sure, I have. Don't forget, that was my money. I earned it."

"Of course, Mr. Yarnell. I hope you understand. In view—"

"I understand all right. And I'm checking out now. I'll pay on my way down."

I hung up. Then I sat on the bed and did some fast thinking. I checked my wallet. Yes, I still had around a hundred in it. And I had a small balance in the bank. And then I had the Cadillac. I could sell that. And Grandfather's watch.

A thought crossed my mind. That watch was not exactly mine till he died. It still belonged to him. I crossed the room swiftly and looked in the drawer. No watch. Grandfather had certainly made a clean sweep. Even Solon.

I rang up Geraughty in Chicago, and reversed the charge. I waited, wondering whether he would accept the call or not. But he did, though his tone was not all that it used to be. Cautious, middle of the road. I could tell, knowing that legal mind of his, that he was not ready to commit himself yet. Especially when he told me about Simkins, grandfather's ex-butler, fired unexpectedly two years ago.

"He's here in my office now, Peter. But he won't talk till you come."

"Won't he say anything?"

"Just that he knows something. He's not in very good shape and I'm not going to press him. Can you come at once?"

"O.K.," I said, "I'll catch the four o'clock plane. I'll have to raise the fare first."

There was a little silence.

Then, very hearty, "Well, see you soon as you get in, Peter, my boy." And he hung up.

I got up and packed my bags and checked out of the hotel and got everything into the car. Then I drove to one used-car dealer after another, spent a couple of hours or so shopping around until I got the best price I could. Then I took a cab to the airport.

When I got to Chicago I went to bed, and reached Geraughty's office just after it opened the next morning. He was already

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there, with Simkins. And Simkins, as I could see at once, had changed. It was two years since Grandfather had fired him without one word of explanation to me or anyone else, and I had not seen Simkins since.

"It's good to see you again, Simkins," I told him, without adding how sorry I was to see him in such shape. He was certainly older, and shaky. "What have you to tell?"

"Well, Mr. Peter," he said. "You remember when I left—and he gave out he had fired me?"

"Yes?"

"I wasn't fired. I quit."

"You quit Grandfather, Simkins, after thirty years?"

"Thirty-three, Mr. Peter. Yes, I quit. You were away when the thing happened. I was alone in the house with him one night. At least, I thought I was alone with him, when, as I was passing his study, I heard voices. He had a visitor, and I knew no one had come into the house because I had locked up myself. I listened at the door, thinking he was arguing with a burglar, and wanted help. That was how I heard it."

He started to get the shakes again at that point, and Geraughty gave him a glass of water. We waited patiently while he sipped the water and gathered his courage, gripping the arms of his chair until his old veins stood out as if they were going to burst. Gradually he became calmer, and told us what he had heard.

"There's no doubt in my mind now," Simkins said, "that I did hear two voices all right, though there have been times in the past months that I've caught myself wondering if maybe the colonel wasn't talking to himself, acting a part, if you understand. But now I know for sure that wasn't so, so I'll tell just what happened.

"The first words I heard were the colonel's own.

"'You mean, sir,' he was saying, 'that I may have the option, all or nothing?'

"Then I heard this other voice. There was something in the tones of it that held me rooted to the spot. It was—" Simkins paused for another sip from his trembling glass—"it was a voice, but it wasn't like a voice, if you know what I mean. I could hear the words distinctly.

"'Yes,' the voice answered. 'It has been decided to grant your wish. It is, however, subject to one condition.'

"'What condition is that?' I heard the colonel ask.

"'It is a matter of locale. The locale would differ if you took it with you, of course.'

"'Hm,' the colonel said. 'Isn't that a bit rough?'

"'My dear colonel,' the voice went on, 'it's hardly surprising,

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

surely?' and added something about, 'The eye of the needle, remember?'

"The colonel said, 'In other words, I can be penniless in heaven or the richest man in—'

"'Precisely,' the other one said.

"There was a pause. I knew the colonel was thinking hard, for then he said, 'When do I have to decide?'

"'You will have plenty of time to do so,' the voice said, and then repeated it, but fading away as though the speaker was moving off to a great distance. '*Plenty of time to do so.*'

"The colonel shouted after it, 'Hey there, don't go yet. Have a Scotch and soda before—darn it, he's gone.'

"It was at this point I opened the door without knocking, walked right into the study and looked all round. There was nobody in that room, upon my soul, but the colonel himself, pouring some whisky with his hand shaking a little and looking up in surprise to see me in the doorway.

"'What's the trouble, Simkins?' he asked.

"I said, 'I heard voices, sir, and thought it might be a burglar.'

"He looked at me real close.

"'What exactly did you hear, Simkins?' he said.

"I told him. I told him just what I'd heard, and by that time I was beginning to get over my shock, and to get annoyed with him for having anything to do with such goings on, and I said to him, 'Of course, sir, you would not dream of entertaining such a notion?' and he said, 'On the contrary, Simkins, though it's none of your business, I shall not only entertain it, but I'll probably settle for it.' I was very shocked, and hurt too. You know, Mr. Peter, how I always loved him, how patient I've been, even in his stubborn moments. But this was too much. To think he would go that far. I gave him a real good scolding, but it did no good. When I saw how it was, then I told him in that case I couldn't stay with him any longer. So I gave notice and quit."

Simkins stopped talking and sat quiet, and Geraughty sat quiet, and I sat quiet. You could hear the traffic way down on the street below through the office window, and Simkins' eyes were glistening a bit as he turned to look at me with an almost pleading expression in his face, and said, "Two years more we could have had with each other—his last two years. I knew I should have stayed, Mr. Peter. Maybe, and this is what I keep thinking, maybe I could have got him round, there are ways of doing it, ways that I knew—" and he broke off and blew his nose violently.

I said, "Simkins, we both know it wouldn't have done any

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WRITERS OF QUALITY
APPEAR IN

argosy

Paul Gallico
Gerald Kersh
Rhys Davies
Geoffrey Household
Georges Simenon
Ray Bradbury
John Wyndham
Victor Canning
David Walker
John Wain

THE
BEST
NEW
STORIES

EVERY
MONTH
2/6

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

good. Nothing you could have done would have changed him over that. Why, man, think of the challenge!"

Simkins suddenly stopped blowing his nose, and gave me a sharp look.

"Mr. Peter!" he exclaimed. "I do believe you approve; you don't mind being disinherited all that much. His grandson all right."

He sighed a little and nodded his old head. "This makes me feel better. It does, and it doesn't . . . You Yarnells."

Well, that was Simkins' story.

I believed it, and Geraughty believed it too, judging by the way he acted. Nothing crude, you understand, but there was no mistake about it. *Out foul client!*

I went back to California the next day. At least they have sun. I looked in at the hotel for mail, and there it was, a thick letter from Laura. Opening revealed that the thickness was due to the returned jewellery—engagement ring and odd trinkets—rather than the amount of the writing. This indeed was brief, but lucid. Just plain old no soap.

I heaved a sigh of relief, and walked to Anson's, thinking that Laura was so smart I might never have found out about her if it had not happened Grandfather's way.

Zona was at the same register, checking some people out, so she didn't see me waiting. I stood till there was a lull before going up, and you should have seen the delight in her eyes before she remembered she was supposed to be sore at me.

I said, "Zona, will you marry me?"

She tried to keep on looking tough.

"You haven't any money," she said.

"That's why I need a wife who's in a steady job."

She said, "Trouble is, you probably take a lot to feed."

Well, we didn't actually get married in the market, but I got a job that afternoon and we were married the next day. And then exactly ten days after we had been married, on our tenth day anniversary, as we called it, it happened . . .

It was about five in the morning, and the night outside our open windows was just beginning to break up so that you could start to make out shapes. It must have been some sound that wakened me, and I sat up in bed. Zona too. We both sat up in bed, staring.

And there he was, kind of half standing, half crouching, by the bed. And in that half dark, half light, you could see that his coat was not right, it was kind of glowing with something. I turned on the light, and he looked at us, and gave a sheepish little

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wag with his tail. It was an apologetic kind of a wag, and his eyes—well, haunted is the only word for them.

I stared at Zona, and she stared at me. Then we each dived out of bed together and made a grab for the telephone. She got there first.

"Call the nearest one—Santa Monica—it's quickest."

She was already dialling. She listened. Then she screamed at me.

"The *ringing* tone! It's back!"

I still couldn't believe it.

"There won't be an answer at this time of night. Let's call the Miami store and make sure—they should be opening about now. What's the time?"

She started to call Florida.

"I don't know the time," she said. "Haven't you got a watch?"

"A watch!"

Quickly I slid my hand under my pillow, and there it was: Grandfather's watch. I pulled it out and showed it to her as she sat with the receiver to her ear. Five thirty, it said.

And then she handed me the receiver, and a voice said, "Yarnell's Store, Miami."

I said, "Is everything all right there?"

"Far as I know. Who's calling, please?"

"Never mind," I said. "That's all I wanted to know."

I put down the telephone and turned to Zona and saw her sitting on the floor with Solon in her arms. She was stroking his coat, and looking at her hands. Then she looked up at me.

"Peter," she said. "I've never seen brimstone before."

I knelt down beside them both.

"Hi, Solon," I said. "I guess Grandfather just couldn't make the grade down there after all."

"Of course he couldn't," Zona said. "Not if he's your grandfather."

"That's sweet of you, Zo—" Suddenly I checked myself, staring at her with a growing suspicion.

"Zona," I said sternly, "you mean you expected this to happen all along?"

She chuckled.

"I'd just love to see Laura's face."

I stared at her.

"Why, I should turn you over my knee, you little minx."

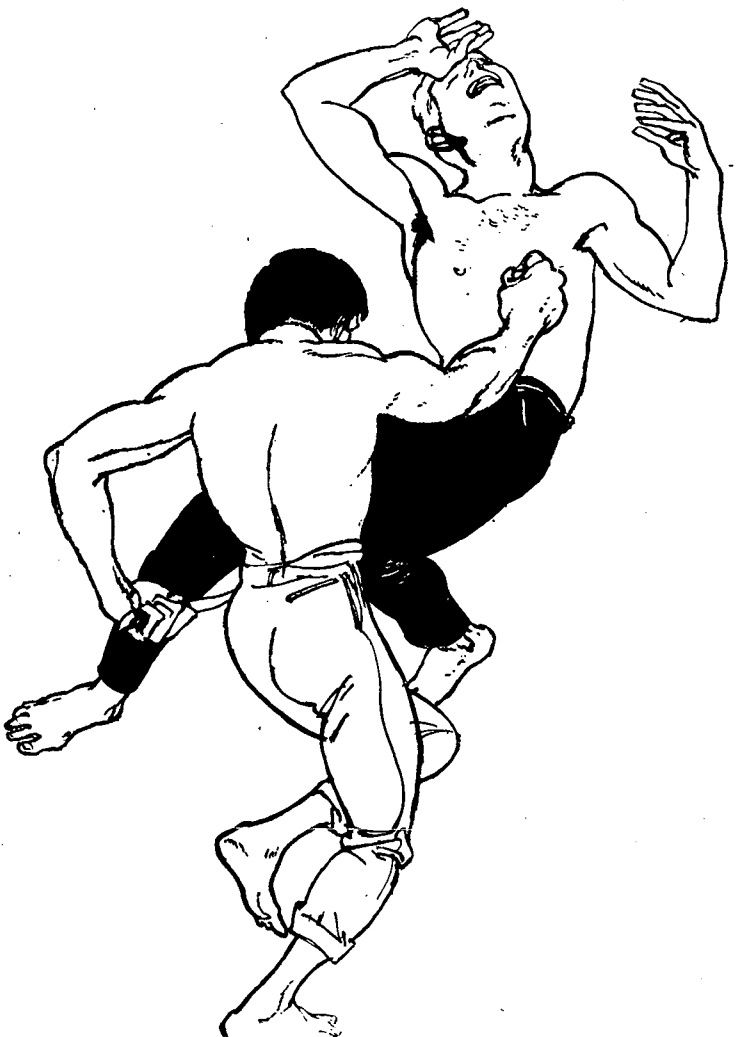
She laughed.

"The word is mink," she said.

© Gordon McDonell 1963

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Fight on



PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hurricane Island

By JOSEPH GREEN

JEREMY, the time has come to settle this thing between us," said Samuel Hogarth.

I looked at his big frame, at the handsome fair head that stood higher than mine by a good four inches, at his easy, relaxed attitude, and I was afraid.

" I always knew it would come to this some day. When we fought as children and you always beat me, I knew one day you and I would meet face to face, man to man, and the story would have a different ending," he went on earnestly. " That time has come, and this will be our final meeting."

I was six months older than Sam and had been larger until our fifteenth year, when he had caught and passed me. Now I looked a runt beside him, and I am a normal five feet eleven and weigh twelve stone.

" What have you got on your mind, Sam? I have work to do."

" Jeremy, you've interfered between myself and Jessica once too often, and I won't stand for it. I give you a choice, which you can make now. Leave town and never come back—or meet me in a fight to the death! "

" You can't scare me out of town, Sam," I said from a throat suddenly gone dry. I took a deep breath and added, " Name your terms."

His heavy, serious face did not change, and if the fact that I accepted his challenge bothered him he hid it well. " Tomorrow morning at sun-up Bill Holly will set you ashore on the west end of Hurricane Island. You can take a knife, scabbard, belt, and pair of trousers. Nothing else. Send one of your friends to deliver me to the east end.

" Day after tomorrow at dawn they come together to pick up the winner."

I thought it over for a moment and didn't like it any too well. Sam was a better woodsman than I, a better hunter and tracker. I had an edge on him in speed, both physically and mentally, but he was far stronger. He had always been a hard and stubborn fighter when he had an advantage over his opponent, and he would have several over me.

" Have you told Jessica about this? " I asked, proud that my voice did not tremble.

" Yes. She has agreed to marry the winner. I told her we

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were going to Hurricane Island to fight it out. That it is to the death need concern only ourselves and our seconds."

"You know, don't you, Sam, that duels are against the law in Florida and the winner, if caught, will be prosecuted for murder?"

"Yes. No one will know. The loser will simply disappear."

"Except Jessica. She'll know all her life she married a murderer. If she'll still go through with it after the fight."

"The winner will tell her the loser has cleared out and left."

"And start a marriage on a big lie? The more I think of it, Sam, the less I like it."

"You have no choice," said Sam. His face was cold and hard. "If you won't meet me in a fair fight I'll kill you from ambush."

"It's that way, is it?"

"It's that way."

"How do I know, Sam, that you haven't stashed a gun or an extra knife somewhere on the island, giving you an unfair advantage?"

His mouth curled a little, and I wished I hadn't said it. "I named Hurricane Island because it's the most convenient. Name another if you like. There are four or five more within ten miles of here. I'd hardly have stashes on all of them."

"Hurricane will do," I said quickly.

"I'm glad you accept. Shooting you in the back would not give me half the satisfaction I'll get from killing you in an open fight."

It was a beautiful spring day in March, 1888. We had been talking in the main room of Simpson's Mercantile Store, where I worked, during a lull in the usually brisk Saturday trade. Duels had been out of fashion in Florida for a long time, longer than my twenty-two years could remember. I had no wish to die in one, or in any other way. But I knew Sam Hogarth, with the intimacy gained by a lifetime of association. He was not an ordinary man. He took his triumphs seriously and his defeats hard. When he lost, he sulked and worried for days. His folks were poor white trash living out in the sandhills, coming in to town on Saturday to swop a few vegetables and livestock for salt, cloth, and other essentials Sam had begun improving his backwoods' English at school and now spoke as well as my father, the Baptist preacher. Sam was apprenticed to Dodgeson, the blacksmith, and his job gave him the means to live independently of his slovenly family; he had long ago left them to their own devices.

As the son of the small Gulf Coast town's only ordained minister I was the expected wild one, always into more trouble than anyone of comparable age and usually getting caught at it. Of course no one doubted that my inherited goodness would win through one day and I'd become a fine, upstanding citizen.

I knew the townsfolk would have chosen Sam over me as a coming young man. But I understood Sam better than they. I was one of the few who knew of his hidden canker, who held as

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

suspect the shifting, restless eyes that never met your own openly and fully, as though afraid to let another person peer into their cloudy depths. Those who knew him didn't like him.

The sun was already kissing the western horizon and I had to hurry. Tomorrow we would both be off from work, which was as Sam had planned it. I had only a little time to choose a second and give him the instructions.

I met Bill Holly, Sam's second, as I was leaving the store. We swiftly agreed to set out from the city pier at five sharp in the morning and I went to look for Wallace Matthews, to ask him to be my second. Wally was one of the few who knew Sam as I did. When I had found him, and repeated the challenge and the threat, he agreed to act for me . . .

I went home to supper and immediately afterwards took out the hunting knife my grandfather had given me: a huge thing with the top half of the blade sharpened on both sides. The type was famous in the West, where Colonel Jim Bowie had made it popular. It was balanced and easy to throw, though I was far from expert.

I got out my father's whetstone and sharpened the knife carefully, oiled the blade thoroughly, and put it away. It had come to me in a good sheath, and I had used it often before, though never for such a deadly purpose.

I did some careful choosing among my belts, finally taking one made of leather that was less ornamental than most but strong and new. At a pinch it would make a strangle rope of passable usefulness. I was aware that I might even now be deciding whether I lived or died on the morrow.

Almost any stout pair of trousers would do. I chose new ones which I could tear into strips for bandages if necessary. In a very few minutes I had my equipment about me and was ready for whatever the future might hold. The night stretched ahead of me, long and dismal.

I decided to visit Jessica and see for myself just what Sam had told her.

Her home was across town. I covered the distance in minutes and walked up the gravelled path to her family's house. The watchdog, to whom I was familiar, growled once and subsided, grumbling. I tapped firmly on the heavy oak panel of the door and there was a quick scurrying of feet inside, the sound of light steps approaching. The door opened wide, and Jessica stood framed in the lamplight.

She was small, fine-boned, graceful, and resilient as a young willow. Her raven-black hair was pulled to the back of her finely-shaped head and bound into a tight bun, prim and unbecoming. Her features were cleanly drawn, almost thin, and they made her dark brown eyes stand out, luminous and gloriously large. Her mouth was the only rich feature of her face. Small also, it was heart-shaped, with full up-curving lips. When she smiled something of her inner nature, the woman of fire and spirit, was there

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on the surface, laughing and joyous. When she held her mouth tight the happiness disappeared and she became a prim and dignified young woman, one with whom it would not pay to trifle. Her bust was small but high and proud, holding its place without the aid of whalebone.

"Why, Jeremy! How nice to see you." Her voice was deeper than you would expect, yet womanly and soft. "Won't you come in?"

"Thank you," I said stiffly, and walked inside the spacious parlour. Her mother was dead and she and an older sister kept house for their father. That formidable gentleman was taking his ease in front of the fireplace, in which a small flame dispelled the chill of the night. He turned to greet me, without rising, and motioned me to a chair by the fire.

I seated myself and made small talk, knowing the routine he invariably followed when I "came a-courtin'." He compelled me to sit by him for the best part of an hour while Jessica and her sister, Letty, prepared the house for bed. Letty was a pretty girl herself, though not in Jessica's class. The fact that she disapproved of me, at least as a potential brother-in-law, she made very obvious.

Letty went to bed as soon as the housework was finished, but Mr. Appleton lingered over a final cup of coffee until past nine o'clock. Jessica had seated herself quietly behind us, away from the fire, taking almost no part in the conversation.

Mr. Appleton finally rose to his feet, yawning broadly. "It's bedtime for the old folks, Jeremy. You'll have to excuse me for the night. Jessica, see that you're in bed by ten sharp."

The old gentleman left us with no further words, and we were alone at last.

"Would you like to sit on the porch for a while?" I asked immediately. The night was only slightly cool and the Appleton's front porch overlooked Massalina Bayou, a lovely sight in the moonlight. I had stolen many a sweet kiss under the spell of that golden beauty of water and light.

"I'd love to," said Jessica, smiling.

There was no moon shining. The night was overcast, dark clouds hanging heavily overhead, and you could hardly see the bayou at all. But it scarcely mattered. I was in no mood for the beauties of moonlight anyway.

"Jessica, Sam and I are going to Hurricane Island tomorrow to fight it out," I began abruptly, when we had seated ourselves in the swing, keeping my voice low. The bedrooms were in the rear of the house, but Letty was perfectly capable of sneaking into the parlour to eavesdrop.

"Yes, I know. I wish it didn't have to be this way, Jeremy, but you're a blot on the clean earth in Sam's sight, and he can't abide you. When he's whipped you I think it would be best for us all if you left town, at least for a few years."

My heart contracted oddly at her words. I could not have been more surprised if she had produced a gun and threatened me. Her

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

calm, immediate acceptance of the fact that Sam would beat me, and her unconcern over it, were complete giveaways. She *wanted* Sam to win! I wondered, sitting in the swing by her side, if even knowing it was a fight to the death would have made her care.

And I had been fool enough to think, for the past year, that I was the leading contender for her hand, that only shyness had made her withhold her consent!

Slowly but powerfully, anger began to build up in me. I clamped a tight rein on the immediate, acute sense of loss and tried to decide what course to steer in the light of this blinding revelation.

" If that's the way it is, I see no point in fighting Sam. You've picked him, win or lose tomorrow. We'll call off the fight. You can have him, with my blessing."

" No! No, Jeremy, you don't understand! You must fight Sam. You won't win—I couldn't expect you to—but there must at least be a fight. Sam must think he's won me, not that I fell into his hand."

The bitterness I had felt before was as nothing to the taste of gall that appeared in my mouth then. Acidly I asked, " What if I should win, Jessica? Would you still marry me? "

" You won't win, Jeremy. You couldn't. You're not the man Sam is."

I got to my feet, and stood looking down at her. " I'm not going to fight Sam. It seems that you're his woman already. Why should I be beaten just to satisfy his childish hate of me when I'd have nothing to gain? No, Sam can have you, and welcome."

She came swiftly to her feet. " I'll marry you if you win, Jeremy. I can say that because I'm sure you won't. But you must fight."

I stood still, steady on my feet. " Just why does the fight mean so much to you, Jessica? "

" I should think you'd know, Jeremy. It's Sam. He places no value in things that come easily. He doesn't know I love him, that I wouldn't dream of marrying anyone else. He must fight you, and beat you, and have me as his prize. That's the only way I'll mean a lot to him. Oh, I've known for months Sam was my choice. Every time you've kissed me this winter I've wished it was Sam holding me, Sam pleading with me, but I'm wise enough to know I mustn't come easily to him. If you love me, as you've said so often these past few months, you'll do what I ask, to get my marriage off to a good start."

" I *did* love you," I answered quickly and cruelly. " I couldn't say those three words now."

Pain was raging wildly within me. I wanted to hurt her as she had hurt me . . . I turned and stepped to the edge of the porch, then whirled round to face her, small and silent in the shadows. " All right, I'll fight Sam. And I'll kill him if I can. You thought this was to be a fist-fight? The loser to leave town? Sam hasn't anything so childish in mind. This is to the death, Jessica. Only one of us will come back alive. He wants it that way and that's the way it will be. I'll bring his head back on a charger . . ."

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I moved down the steps, stopping and turning again at the bottom. I wanted one more thrust, one more stabbing wound, and it came to me in a few casual words: "*See you on Monday, Jessica!*"

Even in the shadows I could see her bosom begin to heave, see the enormous ovals of her eyes. She could not speak, only gasped a little as what I had said penetrated her heart. I turned and walked away.

I slept a few hours, just before daylight and the morning dawned cool and clear. It was still a few minutes before five when I arrived at the dock. Bill Holly was already there. He checked me over quickly and asked me to leave my shirt and shoes behind. I did as he requested and faced the cool breeze bare-chested.

"The terms are clear," Bill explained apologetically, "and you got to follow 'em. Wally will be makin' Sam do the same."

I agreed without argument and seated myself, barefooted and half naked, on one of the two rowing-seats in the boat. Bill took the other, and we pulled out and away from the rotten old dock.

Hurricane is a long narrow island, running east and west across the mouth of the circular bay. It was once connected to the mainland on the western side, but a hurricane battered the land with waves of such terrible force that the pounding water had made a channel close to the mainland and turned a peninsula into an island. Time and the tides had deepened the channel. The island was almost two miles long but not over a quarter of a mile wide at the centre, its widest point. It still had the brush, scrub oak, palmetto, sawgrass, and stunted pine that had grown on it when it was a part of the mainland. The water on the bay side was an excellent scalloping ground and during the summer we used to come over for swimming parties and scallop hunts. I was fairly familiar with the whole island, which was ideal for the purpose Sam had in mind.

It was a full two miles across the bay and though we worked hard it took us an hour to row the distance against the incoming tide. I tried not to tire myself on the oars, but pulled heavily enough to drain the last vestiges of sleep from my muscles and get the blood circulating warmly through my body. When we reached the west end of the island a light sheen of sweat had appeared on my skin and I felt awake and alert, intensely alive and ready for whatever might befall me.

Bill Holly rested his oars for a minute, then hesitantly said, "I can't wish ye luck, Jeremy. I'm fer Sam. But I do hope he changes his mind and don't kill ye."

With that he backed the boat away from the sand beach and headed it towards the mainland.

I looked past him over the water, the two miles of clear green beauty between myself and the town, where I saw the steeple of my father's church standing tall in the Sunday morning sunlight, and then I turned to face the shadowy silences of Hurricane

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Island. The beach at the west end was a full hundred feet of open, untouched sand. Once I crossed that open stretch and entered the shadows of the stunted pines my life was in my own hands. I was not fool enough to think Sam would show any mercy to me. Whether or not I would show mercy to him, should I conquer, was a matter that had been tormenting my mind since I left the Appleton house in such bitter anger the night before. I felt that I owed Jessica nothing. Her acid words had dissolved the feeling I had for her which I had thought imperishable. Yet, a love such as mine was not something you could discard like a worn-out glove. In a strange, bitter-sweet way I found myself almost wanting the affair to end the way she desired it, in order that she might have her Sam. The years would take my vengeance for me in the wreck of their marriage. Another, equally bitter thought was for me to kill Sam and return, bloody and triumphant, to claim my bride. *That* would be a marriage made in heaven!

The irony of this weird tangle was that there was no way at all I could win Jessica, if I still wanted her. If I won the fight, her love for Sam would remain undiminished. Only marriage to him and slow, gradual revelation over a span of years could dim such a bright flame. She would marry me in body, as promised, but her heart would have died with Sam. If I lost I would win neither Jessica nor any other woman.

I paced the short hundred feet to the edge of the woods, then turned and looked back on my footprints clearly showing in the sand. There was no point in erasing them. Sam knew where I was supposed to land and I would leave no tracks after entering the brush.

During the short seconds of the walk I had decided what I wanted to do. Jessica could have her Sam, for my part of it, but not on her terms. I was going to beat Sam, and beat him good, but not kill him. Then he could go home to Jessica and tell her anything he liked. I would never show my face in town again to dispute his story. The good part of the solution was that I was tired of Bay City and had been wanting for months to tear myself away from its smothering confines and see something of the world. Only the thought of the sweetness of Jessica, of what marriage with her could be, had kept me chained. And now that chain was broken.

One thing of which I could be reasonably certain was that Sam would bring the fight to me. If Wally had set him down on the eastern end as scheduled, he would even now be working his way towards me. He would feel confident, as well he might, that he could beat me in a knife fight and his aim would be to bring about a contact between us. He would come warily, expecting a possible ambush, but he would come.

I trotted straight up the centre of the island for a hundred yards. I had at least two hours before Sam, slowly and cautiously as he must come, could reach my end of the island. In that two hours I must build and bait a trap.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

My memory had not played me false. Only a short distance inland from the beach I found a wild scuppernong vine, the shoots newly green with the rebirth of spring. It was wrapped round and about a fallen pine tree of larger than average size. With my knife I cut and trimmed over a hundred feet of the supple vines and, working as swiftly as my fingers would fly, I plaited them together in threes. I soon had a rope about forty feet long, one not as limber as I would have preferred but serviceable and strong.

The trap must be set inland from the vines, since my work there was obvious. I walked eastward another hundred feet. Sam was sure to come down the centre, checking only the edges to make sure I hadn't slipped past him. Close to the end, the island was less than a hundred yards wide and the strip of pines in its centre not more than fifty, and thinly spaced at that.

The best tree for my purpose was the persimmon, since it is extremely limber yet very strong. It had to be in brush thick enough to conceal it from a casual glance, yet fairly close to an open track. The one I selected was a young tree, not over fifteen feet tall. A natural path ran about thirty feet from it, almost in the centre of the island, yet the tree itself was in thick brush, concealed on the side nearest the path by two scrubby pines.

I climbed the little tree, as high as it would bear my weight, and looped my belt about the narrow trunk a couple of feet from the top. Then, holding my belt, I swung off on the side nearest the path and the resilient trunk lowered me gently to the ground. With the free end of the belt I made a saddle-hitch to the nearest pine branch capable of holding the weight and went after my improvised rope.

It took a little doing to tie the ends of the vines round the sapling without breaking them, but I accomplished it. Then I shifted my belt, bringing the treetop lower and pulling it as far forward as my strength permitted. When I felt that I had the maximum pressure the sapling would stand, I fastened the belt again and completed my trap.

Taking the free end of the vine rope I strung it out to the natural path I had found and, making a loop about four feet wide in the end, spread it there.

The trigger stopped me. I debated for a moment the idea of making one, then gave it up and decided to work the trap by hand. I needed to be close by, to finish subduing Sam in case he did not get snatched sufficiently hard to knock him senseless. There was a possibility the violent pull of the trap might snap his neck, but I doubted having such luck.

Holding the sapling firmly, I rearranged the belt to where a quick yank would free the pliant tree. After that I had to hide my work, and arrange the loop so that the edge away from the tree was six inches off the ground, out of fear that it might pull under his feet and miss him completely. The tree's bent shape was fairly well hidden behind the two pines. The spot where I intended to lie in ambush was in thick brush, well concealed from the path.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A little careful work in and round the path obliterated all traces of my having been there, and it took only a few leaves and pine needles, scattered with care on the ground where they abounded, to hide the loop itself. The trap was ready.

I glanced at the sun overhead. It was riding high, almost halfway to noon. My two hours were up. I settled myself in hiding. If my timetable was accurate, Sam would be along at any moment.

I heard Sam while he was still a good way off. I heard him because he was gaily whistling.

He came noisily and happily through the brush, as careless and unheeding of waiting death as though he would welcome its cold embrace.

For the first time in my life I felt a small touch of admiration for Sam. His hatred was so profound that the prospect of killing me made him careless of his own life and safety. Such galling effrontery, such complete lack of respect for my ability to harm him, made me regret the decision I had made to spare his life, but for Jessica's sake, for what she thought she wanted, I would persevere.

I huddled closer to the ground, completely hidden, and waited.

Sam took his time. I realised, as he happily whistled his way through *Ol' Dan Tucker*, that he was coursing back and forth across the width of the island, moving enough from centre on either side to ensure that I did not slip past him. All he wanted, obviously, was a face-to-face encounter, from which only one of us would walk away.

After a moment more he emerged from the brush on the other side of a clear strip of sand, perhaps fifty feet wide, that ran completely across the island a hundred yards farther inland. He stopped and stood half hidden in the shadows, staring across the open sand. The whistling ceased.

Having satisfied himself I was not crouched in ambush at the edge of the brush, Sam moved into the open and crossed the sandy area. I saw him clearly for the first time, saw his tall, muscular form, the golden hair, the Apollo ease in his careless stride. I saw, also, what had made him seem odd, out of shape, in the shadows, and my breath caught in my throat. I felt strangled, suddenly weak; a hammering, strong and insistent, began behind my eyes, for I saw my death walking towards me.

Sam came on silent now and intent, darting quick and penetrating glances on all sides. Bare-chested, barefooted, he had the hunter's keen eye, the wariness of wild things. He was a walking reincarnation of primitive man, on the trail of an animal he must kill.

I was that animal, and there was little doubt Sam could kill me. Strapped across his back was a large quiver, filled with steel-tipped arrows. In his hand was a long bow, an arrow already on the string.

There was no time to think, to change my plan. He was across

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the open space and into the shadows in a few strides. Quaking, I crouched lower and watched him come. On this narrow end of the island there was no need to search both sides of the centre. He came straight down the semi-open path towards my trap.

I plucked up my courage and waited. To expose myself meant swift death under sharp-edged arrows. And knowing Sam as I did, I had no doubt he had practised with the bow until he was thoroughly proficient.

He was frowning now, all semblance of gaiety gone from his tanned face. There was only a very little more island to search.

He was looking about him more carefully than he was watching his footing. I felt my hopes stir and come alive. In the space of a few heartbeats he had covered the short hundred yards from the open space to the trap and was walking calmly towards it, his restless, shifting gaze probing the undergrowth on both sides and the tall trees overhead.

He walked to within five feet of the trap, glanced casually ahead, and saw it.

He stopped, and the frown left his face. Slowly he smiled, and then he chuckled quietly to himself. Here was his confirmation that I was on the island, and his victim and prey. He took two steps and stopped just outside the circle, examining it with a critical eye. From there he lifted his gaze, and I held my breath as he stared directly at the point where I crouched by the limber end of the young tree. In an involuntary action, lest they should gleam in the shadows, I closed my eyes. When I opened them again, his gaze had shifted and he was examining the undergrowth on the other side of the trail.

"This is an awfully poor trap, Jeremy," he said loudly, looking at the clump of bushes across the trail. They were thicker than the ones I crouched behind and would have made a better shelter. Also, they were about thirty-five feet from the trap. I was hidden not more than fifteen feet from where he stood.

"I'm ashamed of you, Jeremy—" Sam continued the one-sided conversation—"no self-respecting hunter would permit himself to be caught in a thing that obvious. Do you think I'm blind?"

As he spoke Sam stooped, picked up a branch and stirred the crude rope circle. When nothing happened he hooked the end of the branch in the circle and gave it a vigorous tug.

I yanked on the belt. The loop closed with a rush, locking firmly round the branch. It was snatched out of Sam's grasp as though demon-hurled and rocketed through the air at the end of the vine rope. The supple tree straightened with terrible speed, went on past the plumb and bent far to the other side. As it returned to centre again the branch went hurtling past, took up the slack in the rope, and broke it when it reached the end. The branch went flying on, landing at least eighty feet away.

"That would have snatched me loose from my teeth, wouldn't it, Jeremy," Sam said aloud, and chuckled again. Turning his back on me, he lifted the bow to a shooting stance. Crouching a

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

little, he began stalking the brush on the other side of the trail.

He had not realised the trap had a live trigger. His misconception of the trap's operation gave me a slim and puny chance to live. I waited, not daring to make a sound, until he reached the brush pile and went out of sight round it.

I sprang to my feet and darted towards the sandy open space. Dodging, leaping, jumping, keeping behind whatever cover was available, I fled at my best speed. Behind me I heard hurried footsteps as Sam came back round the brush to the trail; then the heavy crashing of small branches as he started in pursuit.

It took me only seconds to reach the edge of the open ground. I realised, as I started across, that behind me all sounds of pursuit had ceased.

I turned my head for one quick, appraising glance. Sam was standing in the centre of the trail a hundred feet behind me, unmoving and calm. The bow was raised, the string drawn. He intended to stand where he was and get me as I crossed the open space.

I had no choice but to run that gauntlet of death. I darted into the open, my mind working as busily as my feet. After two strides I threw myself to the left, landed on my hands in the sand, rolled over once, and scrambled to my feet again. My guess had been good. The arrow whistled through the air where I would have been on the third step. I had barely got up speed again, this time angling down the length of the sandy course, when another arrow almost touched me on my right side.

The cover of the brush was close now. I did a sharp left turn, angling back towards Sam slightly, and jumped straight for the woods, bending over as I entered their shade. His last arrow pierced my right hip, the force of the impact knocking me off my feet.

I was up and bounding away in seconds, the sting of the arrow hardly felt, though it still clung to the fleshy part of my right buttock. After a moment more the pain began to come, strong and demanding. I reached back to remove the arrow, but it had penetrated deeply enough for the barbs to become imbedded. I would have to stop and cut it out.

I glanced behind me, at my own trail. The wound was not bleeding too badly and my trouser leg was soaking up all blood. Slowing down a little, I began to hide my passage. At the same time my brain started functioning again.

Oddly, it had not occurred to me until now that the contest was off. I no longer felt any obligation, moral or otherwise, to finish this uneven battle. Now my sole concern was to keep life in my body and get off the island. When that thought had penetrated, another swiftly followed. I was going the wrong way. From the eastern end it was a full two miles to the shore, farther than I could safely expect to swim. From the western end, where I had landed, it was only five hundred feet across the pass to the long

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

narrow peninsula which connected with the mainland. Except when the swift tide was running, it was an easy swim.

The obvious thing to do was hide in the undergrowth, let Sam pass by me on his return trip, and then swim the pass to shore. There I could tell the whole story to the sheriff and have Sam brought before a judge for attempted murder. The fact that I was wounded, and fairly seriously, made it foolish for me to stay and attempt to fight.

My best course of action was so clear it would be equally apparent to Sam. Knowing he could not now let me escape he would come east slowly, searching the brush thoroughly. For him, it was now a matter of killing me or losing all he had hoped to gain. He would take his time, be methodical and slow, and he would not miss me.

I ran for a quarter of a mile, stopped, panting, and rested a precious moment. Looking about me I spied a thick clump of brush and forced my way into it. Once in the centre, I enlarged the hole the arrow had made in my trousers and explored the wound with my fingers. The arrow had penetrated from the side, and one point of the barb was securely under the surface of the skin.

I was badly handicapped by not being able to see what I was doing, but I took the bowie and made an incision just above the buried barb. The pain, which would normally have been almost unbearable, was only a minor torment. I was keyed to such a pitch of excitement I could hardly feel pain. The blood gushed out of the new wound, wet and sticky, but the barb came free. As gently as I could, I worked the arrow loose, and at last held the bloody, deadly thing in my hand.

I was bleeding profusely now. With the bowie I cut off the trouser leg that was not yet blood-soaked and made a rough bandage, folding one piece into a pad and cutting straps to bind it in place. What I achieved was of doubtful value, but it would stop the bleeding.

I needed to stay and rest but I knew there would not be time. Sam must already have covered most of the territory between us. Even now he might be creeping towards my shelter. I stepped out of the brush, being careful not to tear the undergrowth, and keeping my feet on the grass. I stopped and looked back. The blood I had shed was well hidden.

I set off at an easy lope for the eastern end, carrying in my hand the barb which had almost been my death. A slow and burning anger had begun to possess me. I was not sure now that, even if some way had been miraculously opened to me, I would have called off the duel and returned to the mainland. My wound was hurting, with a strong persistent throbbing, and I was lightheaded from hard exercise after a heavy loss of blood. Though in no shape to fight an antagonist like Sam, I knew I must, and *must win if I hoped to live.*

I would have a little time. It would not occur to Sam that I should run straight to the end of the island. Once he lost my trail Sam would check every large patch of brush, every available hiding-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TWO FREE BOOKS FOR NEW WRITERS

Would you like to write articles, stories, radio scripts, etc., in your spare time, and sell what you write? If so, you should at once send for "SALEABLE WRITING" and "PLOTTING MADE EASY." two valuable books that will give you some "inside" knowledge about writing for pleasure and profit!

BRILLIANTLY "DIFFERENT"

"PLOTTING MADE EASY" is a manual for fiction writers which solves all plotting problems and teaches a really successful method. "SALEABLE WRITING" is forthright and honest, and in addition to much other interesting information, gives details of our modern Home Study Courses in Journalism and Fiction Writing. Both books FREE and without obligation from :—

Dept. of JOURNALISM

SCHOOL OF CAREERS

591, COLLEGE HOUSE
29 Wrights Lane, London, W.8

SELL YOUR WRITING

Thousands of new and established writers are getting into print by using these practical Courses and books by LIONEL STEBBING.

Write for Children. The easiest way to break into print. Full Course with 200 markets. 6/-.

How to Write Saleable Stories. A complete Course in plotting and writing marketable stories. 100 markets. 6/-.

How to Write and Sell Articles. Based on 35 years' success. 6/-.

The above 3 courses 15/- post free.

Making Your Characters Live. 4/10d.
Find the Facts. 1,145 sources. 4/10d.
Mind Training for Writers. 4/10d.
Overseas Markets. 3/6d.
Make it Sell. How to revise MSS. 4/10d.
How to Write for the Radio. (Carr). 4/10d.
Plot Digest. (Knight). 150 Key Plots. 31/6d.
Story Plotting Simplified (Eric Heath) 24/6d.
How to Make $18,000 a year Freelance writing (Farrar). 40/-.

LIONEL STEBBING, 28 (AR26) DEAN ROAD, LONDON, N.W.2

Full list free. Established 1928

WRITE FOR TV

(Proprietors: Scriptwriters' Ltd.)

DEPT. 3/6

53 Fleet Street, London EC4

offers postal tuition in TV script-writing for the BBC and commercial companies. The ten lesson course has been prepared by top TV Directors; Producers and Scriptwriters. Write or ring for illustrated brochure, **FLE: 7159,** 24hr service including weekends.

HEATHER JENNER

MARRIAGE BUREAU

124 New Bond St., W.1

Mayfair 9634

Advice Bureau at the same address

OVER 40,000 DRAWINGS SOLD by PRESS ART SCHOOL STUDENTS

4,000 to Punch alone! This is what the unique P.A.S. home-study course can achieve. In a few months, you too could amaze your friends. Our new lavishly-illustrated book (containing nearly 100 drawings) —FREE.

PRESS ART SCHOOL, 100/A, COLLEGE HOUSE, WRIGHT'S LN., LONDON, W.8

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PARENTS are ENCYCLOPAEDIAS

Well, they're expected to be. Very young children, as all parents know, are very full of questions. That is why even the most encyclopaedic fathers and mothers welcome TREASURE, a colour weekly which helps to answer 5 to 9 year old queries because it *entertains* as it informs, amuses as it instructs.

FREE

in issue dated May 18. "MY TREASURE TALL BOOK OF BABY ANIMALS." "Tall" because it's 12 in. deep by 4½ in. wide! Full colour covers and delightful drawings your children can colour themselves if they wish.

PLUS

The first of three jig-saw pictures, gummed and ready to cut out and stick on the key in the presentation book. Two more jig-saws in issues dated May 25 and June 1.

24 pages, 12 in full colour.

Helps little children to look and learn.

TREASURE

EVERY MONDAY 1/-

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

place, in his progress eastward. There would be no slipping past him and I did not choose to try. Somewhere deep in my soul I took an irrevocable step, and this contest became not a fight between two men over a girl but a duel to the death between mortal enemies. I had begun this fight full of selfconfidence, and now it looked as if it must end in my death. I had sorely underestimated Sam, and the blood left in the brush was the price I paid.

I reached the eastern end in less than half an hour without tiring myself. I stopped in the last thick patch of cover and set to work. My opponent's greatest advantage over me at the moment was the possession of a bow and arrow. I must have one also.

In the middle of the thicket was another persimmon tree. I hastily selected a branch and hacked it off with the heavy knife. I had no time in which to make a smooth, finished job, and it would in no circumstances be as good a bow as the one Sam possessed, but it could be made into a lethal weapon.

I had picked a fairly thick branch, knowing I would not have time to test the weapon thoroughly. I cut off the bark and smoothed the small limbs and twigs, then swiftly shaped it to a supple bow, leaving it very thick in the centre. What I achieved was rough, but when I bent it in my hands it sprang back upon release with satisfying force.

I cut my leather belt into three strips. Two of these I tied together and with them strung the bow. I had one arrow, ready made. It would not be enough, but at least I had a weapon if Sam should come upon me before I finished my preparations. I lifted the bow, selected a target about fifty feet away, and shot. The arrow went wide of the mark by ten feet. I had not allowed enough for the side-kicking motion given to the arrow by the thick centre of the bow. Retrieving the arrow, I tried again and came closer. I then changed my distance, moving up to within twenty-five feet, and gained an idea of how much to allow in proportion to my distance from the target. I returned to the first spot and shot again. I was surprised at how close I came. With a target as large as Sam, I had a good chance of at least crippling him.

One arrow, though, was hardly an adequate supply of ammunition. With the bowie I hacked some limbs from a nearby cedar and fashioned three more arrows, making them larger than was convenient, like the bow, but keeping their strength by their thickness. Having no feathers, I had no choice but to do without. For points I went down to the shore and picked up several clam shells. By breaking them in two and chipping on the sides of each piece, I managed three very sharp, semi arrow-shaped heads. I split one end of each arrow and wedged in a shell, tying them in place with the remaining leather from my belt. Then I trimmed the shaft down to a narrow tail, leaving the shell-sharp end very heavy; I had a fairly presentable arrow.

With luck I would not need my three rough creations at all. The one arrow I possessed, sent truly, would end the fight. I doubted the accuracy of my aim with the crude bow and rough

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arrows, but hard fate might compel me to live or die by their merits.

I had spent well over an hour in preparation. It was about time for Sam again.

He would not come walking noisily through the brush this time. I was forewarned and forearmed. There would be no gay whistling, no careless, godlike ease of bearing. He would come like a creature of the hunt stalking his prey, intent and alert, death hiding cloudily behind his pale eyes. It was past midday now. If I should be lucky enough to evade him once more I might last until dark, and then it would be an easy matter to hide until the boat returned in the morning. He had to get me before darkness fell or his elaborate murder plan was ruined.

I saw Sam coming.

He was following the same manœuvre he had used before, walking down the centre of the island and going far enough at each side to make sure I was not hidden in the brush. This time, he was keeping a wary eye in front as well. There was no chance of catching Sam in a hastily dug pit or logfall. He was alert, anxious to meet me and end it, but ever mindful of the safety of his own skin.

The faint glimmering of an idea came. From where I crouched in the brush, watching him, to the largest and thickest stand of bushes on this end of the island was a distance of only forty or fifty feet. I dug hastily in the sand and found a heavy shell. Sam was coming on steadily, methodical and careful, an arrow always on his string. The large patch of brush was to his left. I waited until he had first examined all possible cover on his right and then recrossed from centre and started on the large brushpile. Standing up, I hefted the shell and watched Sam. There was suddenly in his stance, his bearing, a consciousness of being watched. Almost, he turned his head. I saw the involuntary quiver of his neck: Then he decided that he had found me, that I was crouching somewhere in the pile before him, and lifting his bow to the ready he went on round the brush and out of my sight.

I threw the shell. Arc-ing high and true, it came down with a small splintering of wood, a distinct but not loud noise, in the middle of the brush pile. I crouched down again and waited.

Seconds later Sam emerged from the opposite side of the thicket at a run. Not seeing me fleeing away he paused in indecision, then started his slow and intent circle again, this time keeping farther away from the edge of the thicket. He had no intention of letting me get close enough to him to do him damage.

I had achieved a good part of what I wanted, what I felt I must have. Sam's attention was wholly and completely on the brush pile. I stepped out from behind my shelter, my own rude and undependable bow at the ready, and advanced on Sam. The die was cast, the cards dealt, and one of us must stand and the other fall by their decision.

I got quite close without his hearing me, something I could not

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have managed if he had not thought he had me placed. When I was within thirty feet I spoke.

"Turn round, Sam!"

He did more than turn. He leapt. Like a stricken deer on impact of the shot, like an arrow bolting from his own bow, he sprang ahead and to the side, turning even as he landed on his feet, the deadly bow rising. When he ceased to be a moving target, I shot, even as his own arrow came winging towards me. He was not ready, was shooting from too quick an aim. His arrow whistled past my head as my own, aimed at his heart, missed from even that short range and gashed him across the ribs.

He reached for another arrow, then thought better of it and snatched out his knife, for I had thrown down my own clumsy weapon and advanced on him. Though Sam's size and strength gave him the advantage in a knife fight, I still had a better chance there than in trying to duel with my inaccurate bow. If he had completed his movement I could have sprung and buried the bowie in his heart before he could shoot.

We paused, facing each other at not more than five paces. He was breathing heavily, from excitement and anticipation rather than effort. There was a wild, twisted look on his face, and the naked hate that peered from his cloudy eyes made me tremble deep in my soul.

"This is the way it ought to be," he said slowly, his voice ragged and uneven.

"You and me, Jeremy, and no one but the devil under us to tell the tale. A knife apiece, a man to man fight, and only one survivor. I didn't need the bow anyway. I can kill you in a fair fight."

As he spoke the word "fair" his arm drew back in a gesture faster than the eye could follow, and while the "fight" was still lingering in the air his knife came winging towards me.

There are some things so apparent they escape you until those who know you despair that you will ever learn them.

I had thought, since the depth of Sam's hate was first revealed, that he yearned for nothing more than an opportunity to sink a knife in me. I had taken it for granted that hate had made him strong. The cowardice he had displayed in youth, his dislike for combat with an equal had, I thought, been buried in the past. True, he had had very little trouble since his late growth had made him such a formidable opponent, but we had all somehow got into the habit of thinking Sam a brave man.

He was an arrant, boastful coward. Despite his advantages of height and strength, despite the fact that I was wounded, he still did not want to fight me fairly. He had tricked me with words while he made a treacherous throw, gambling on burying the knife in my guts and not having to come to grips with me in a finish fight.

He nearly succeeded. There was no time to dodge, to turn. The bright steel came flying, glinting slightly in the sunshine. There was nothing I could do, no time to move. I was holding my knife in my right hand, poised to cut. My left arm I instinctively jerked

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in front of me, muscles bunched, the arm upturned against my chest. The knife throw was good. The sharp point penetrated my elbow and jarred to a stop against the bone. I think it cracked it. This time there was pain, sudden and agonising, but it was a blessed pain, a pain that told me I might yet live.

I pulled Sam's knife free and tossed it over my shoulder. The blood gushed out in a red stream, but I paid it no heed. Holding the bowie in my right hand, heedless that my own life drained out of me on to the white sand, I walked towards Sam. My deepest fear was that he would turn and run and that in my weakened condition I might not catch him, might forfeit the satisfaction of burying my knife in his treacherous heart.

Sam might well have run. I knew him now for a coward, and there was no point in making a fight of it, making a show of bravery when he was unarmed. What made him fight was the quality that had always lurked, cloudy and tenebrous, behind his eyes. For the first time since I had known Sam his eyes cleared, what rested there shining forth plain and clear.

Sam went mad.

He jumped back a few steps and stooped to pick up a dead branch. I had followed his movements and was close upon him when he reared up, the branch held high, no trace of sanity on his features. Gone now the air of godlike calm, the handsome cast of face, the selfconsciously splendid figure of a man. What growled at me between loose lips was only a mad animal.

He leapt at me, swinging the large limb as though it were a child's toy. I dodged sideways and stabbed hard with the bowie, cutting him about the ribs but not hurting him seriously. Before I could jump back to safety the club was again in position, again coming for my head, and this time I closed with him, stabbing and hacking in a rush of bloodlust, not caring if the club caught me so long as I could bury the knife in his body.

I sank the bowie to the hilt in his chest, felt the solid impact of the blade cutting deep, and then the sun bloomed in a burst of fiery splendour, appallingly bright, and I knew nothing more.

It was the self-same sun which awakened me. This time it was milder, less penetrating and abrupt. It came through a mist of clouds and was gentle and kind as it warmed my face. It was red, also, for it had just risen.

I pushed Sam's body off my legs, where it had lain the night through, and took stock of myself. I was near dead from exposure and from the quantities of blood lost from my two wounds, but both of them were dry enough now. My left arm was completely useless to me, and I did not possess enough strength to rise. There was little I could do but lie there; the sandflies were already crawling over Sam's body.

That was where Bill Holly and Wally Matthews found me half an hour later, when no one met them at the agreed rendezvous point, and they came hunting the living and the dead.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I asked them to dig a deep hole about fifty feet from the beach, and this they did. I was of no help to them, but they did a fair job and the body was well hidden.

When we had erased most of the traces of the combat the three of us returned to the boat, Bill and Wally helping me when I faltered. They had brought food, knowing we fighters had none, and weak though I was I ate my first meal for twenty-four hours. When we got into the boat I asked Bill and Wally to row me to the middle of the stretch of water.

They looked at me strangely, but did as I requested.

We were in time. The Australian freighter which had docked in town the week before to load rosin, was steaming slowly towards us, the black smoke trailing thick and noxious behind it. It was bound for Mobile, where I had been but where I was unknown. From there it would not be hard to land myself a berth on some steamer bound for the other side of the world.

I did not have to leave. Wally and Bill were the only persons, other than Jessica herself, who would know what had happened to Sam, and they were true and would not talk. I could disguise my wounds under a cloak of illness, stay in bed a few days, and resume my old life. And I could have Jessica. She had promised, and she would fulfil.

She had promised in the certainty that it would be Sam who returned. If I had beaten him it would, in her eyes, have been accomplished by deceit and fraud, and she would hate his conqueror with a passion that was boundless. Only the gaining of what she wanted, and time, would have revealed to her that Sam was no man. Now that he was dead he would be for ever a hero.

I felt a strange, morbid desire to return to Bay City and do just what would be most unwise, marry the lovely Jessica and possess her in hate, live in the acid of unforgiveness the rest of our days. I no longer felt any love for her, but she was a beautiful and desirable woman and I could spite both of us by forcing her into a union which she would hate for the rest of her life. But I am not a Sam Hogarth. My hate was not that deep. Even the pain I had received at her hands was not so galling that I desired such a long revenge.

The ship stopped at our hail, and I clambered up the rope ladder as best I could with one useful arm. I did not look back.

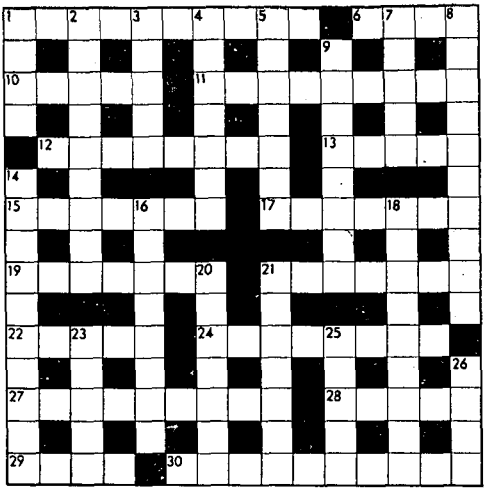
© Joseph Green 1963

SOLUTION to ARGOSY CROSSWORD on page 136

Across. 1, *Troopships*. 6, *Peep*. 10, *Whelp*. 11, *Very-light*. 12, *Platinum*. 13, *Gusto*. 15, *Arrests*. 17, *Dutiful*. 19, *Hostess*. 21, *Partner*. 22, *Leg up*. 24, *Nearness*. 27, *Volunteer*. 28, *Grime*. 29, *Rose*. 30, *Sleep tight*.

Down. 1, *Town*. 2, *Overlords*. 3, *Pipit*. 4, *Havanas*. 5, *Pyramid*. 7, *Edges*. 8, *Potboilers*. 9, *Blighter*. 14, *Bath Oliver*. 16, *Sleeping*. 18, *Finessing*. 20, *Sand-eel*. 21, *Prairie*. 23, *Gills*. 25, *Night*. 26, *Meet*.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



ACROSS

1 Male carriers, mainly (10).

6 Look both ways? (4).

10 Puppy gets 80% assistance (5).

11 Slender flare, perhaps (4-5).

12 Plum—in a tin—shows metal (8).

13 Gus comes to, with relish (5).

15 Apprehends engineers in arts (7).

17 Do Customs officers feel this? (7).

19 An entertaining lady (7).

21 See 16.

22 Oddly enough, it's a helping hand (3, 2).

24 Proximity of stingy Scottish monster? (8).

27 Soldier not impressed by Loch Leven tour (9).

28 With a shilling, Peter can transform this mess into opera (5).

29 Flower of English prose writers (4).

30 Drunk in bed? (5, 5).

DOWN

1 City I quit to win (4).

2 Bowlers' play at Lords makes them superiors (9).

3 Seedy bird! (5).

4 Shaving—an ass sings out for cigars (7).

5 Mary comes up in middle of monument (7).

7 Moves stealthily from cursed Gestapo centre (5).

8 Literary works—for the kitchen? (10).

9 Wretch isn't so heavy after all (8).

14 Friday night in Fagin's kitchen takes the biscuit! (4, 6).

16, and 21 across Nodding acquaintance? (8, 7).

18 Using artifice by means of fine signs (9).

20 Just the sort of fish to see land (4-3).

21 It's perfectly plain (7).

23 Necessary measures for tadpoles (5).

25 Thing changed by darkness (5).

26 Fitting assembly of sports (4).

Printed in England by PERCY BROTHERS LTD., THE HOTSPUR PRESS, MANCHESTER, 1, and published on the tenth of each month by FLEETWAY PUBLICATIONS LTD., FLEETWAY HOUSE, FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.4. Registered for Transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Subscription Rates, Inland, £1 10s. 0d. 12 months, 19s. 6d. for 6 months. Overseas (except Canada), £1 17s. for 12 months, 18s. 6d. for 6 months. Canada, £1 14s. 6d. for 12 months, 17s. 3d. for 6 months. Sole Agents: Australasia, MESSRS. GORDON & GOTCH LTD.; South Africa, CENTRAL NEWS AGENCY LTD.; Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, MESSRS. KINGSTONS LTD. ARGOSY is sold subject to the following conditions, namely, that it shall not, without the written consent of the publishers first given, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise disposed of by way of Trade except at the full retail price as shown on the cover; and that it shall not be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise disposed of in a mutilated condition or in any unauthorised cover by way of Trade; or affixed to or as part of any publication or advertising, literary or pictorial matter whatsoever.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

£100 FIRST PRIZE

in easy Letter Contest, and other cash prizes

You can obtain full details of this easy Letter Contest in the FREE ENTRY FORM available to everyone.

Moreover, you can have the Free "Know-How Guide to Writing Success." In it, you learn—as so many have done—how to gain additional income by writing saleable articles and stories. You can learn how to obtain editorial cheques when you know how to make use of your daily life and experiences.

Send *now*, then, for the FREE ENTRY FORM to the easy, valuable Letter Contest—and the inspiring FREE (H) "Know-How Guide" which tells you about the No-Sales-No Fees training—the Free subscription to the "Writer"—the two Free writing encyclopaedias. There is no obligation; send NOW.

B.A. School of Successful Writing Ltd.
124 New Bond Street, W.1.

NEW HAIR!

WITH XL 17 HAIR FOOD

The potent tonic vitamins of new-formula XL 17 Hair Food reach into the scalp and nourish weak and lazy hair roots. They stimulate the growth of new hair and help thinning hair to thrive again!

ACT NOW! Slip a £1 postal order in an envelope and post it with your name and address for a bottle of XL 17 to :—

Q.C. Clinics Ltd., Hair Specialists, Dpt. A.11, Princess House, Exeter, Devon

*Give NEW HAIR A CHANCE TO GROW and YOU'LL BE AGREEABLY SURPRISED at the RESULTS

DAVIES INVESTMENTS LTD.

PRIVATE BANKERS

Gross Assets Exceed £2,500,000

Are paying 7½% p.a. interest on deposits for the **TENTH** year in succession, with ½% added annually on each **£500** unit.

Details and Audited Balance Sheet from Investment Dept. AR.,

DAVIES INVESTMENTS LTD.
Danes Inn House, 265 Strand, London, WC2

THE ASHLEY MARRIAGE BUREAU

10, CORPORATION ST. MANCHESTER 4.

Successful introductions arranged throughout the country. A well established reliable, confidential service

For expert advice read

POPULAR GARDENING

Edited by GORDON FORSYTH

EVERY THURSDAY 6d.

WRITERS!

If you are not selling your MSS we would like to hear from you. Free criticism and market advice on all kinds of literary work is available to Penman Club members the world over. The cost of membership is less than 5d. per week! Write today for free prospectus (no obligation) to—

Dept. A 1, The Penman Club, Penman House, 70a London Road Southend-on-Sea, Essex.

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a Facey

Short Story Writing

Everyone has a story in his life. No matter how humdrum that life has been it contains at least one episode which would, properly handled by a writer, entertain readers.

But there are more fictional possibilities than that. The trained story writer realises that every day of one's life holds fictional material.

If you have aptitude you can be trained to work ideas into plots and make stories of them which editors would be glad to buy.

Learn the essential technique by post—the Regent Institute way—under the stimulating guidance of successful writers.

Earning While Learning

You are shown how to get plots (the R.I. Plot Finder—a valuable aid—taps dozens of sources of ideas), how to construct, how to write dialogue, how to prepare MSS. and HOW TO SELL THEM.

Many R.I. students have had short stories accepted while learning, and some of them have recouped the fee *several times over* before completing the lesson.

The widely recommended Regent Institute literary courses include specia contributions by famous writers.

★ Send today for HOW TO SUCCEED AS A WRITER

Take the first step now by sending t the Regent Institute for a free copy c "How to Succeed as a Writer," whic contains striking facts about the opening for new writers today.

This informative prospectus shows ho the tuition is planned to help you to g into print as soon as possible—how yo can make extra income by spare-tim writing, *wherever you live.*

Write today for this interesting bookle --without any obligation. By applyin promptly you will have the opportunity o enrolling at very moderate fees.

A Student writes:

"My acceptances now total over seventy short stories and picture scripts. Altogether my earnings over the past five years have totalled around £1,300, which I think you will agree is very satisfactory."

THE REGENT INSTITUTI

(Dept. AR/15T), Palace Gate, London, W.8

Over 1,850 newspapers and periodicals have bought stories, articles, etc., from R.I. students —a record without parallel

PRODUCED BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED